

# the defenestrator

issue 46

Fall 2009

**SPECIAL  
INSERT:**  
OUT OF THE FRYING  
PAN INTO THE FIRE



## 10 Years Since the Seattle WTO

Looking back on a mobilization  
that shook global capitalism

(a journal for hope and refusal)

AIDS Policy & Obama pg. 9

Save Mill Creek Farm! pg. 5

Philly Gets a Budget pg. 4

Pittsburgh G20 pg. 6-7



also this issue:

Victory for Art Museum Guards \* Hell On Earth : US Prisons \* Victory for Movement for Justice in the Barrio \*  
Action for Healthcare \* \* Philadelphians take to the streets against Coup in Honduras \* Take Back the Land \*  
BOMB IT: Philly Graffiti History \* Capitalism a Love Story takes anti-capitalism into the mainstream



the defenestrator

The defenestrator is Philly's sporadic newspaper for resistance, creative revolution and action. To defenestrate Power means total refusal of its tools and tentacles. Like the Hussites who had their oppressors thrown down from the Prague castle into the angry mob below, the defenestrator wrestles power and privilege from its highest and most protected strongholds and casts the beast out of the window and down into the angry hands of the people.

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# Casino Free Philadelphia takes Direct Action

On September 29th, more than 60 Casino-Free activists gathered at the SugarHouse Casino construction site in Fishtown. Making a bold stand against casinos in Philadelphia, they locked arms and blocked construction trucks from entering the site. Fourteen of the activists who were prepared engage in civil disobedience were arrested, taken into custody and charged with disorderly conduct.

From Casino Free Philadelphia's statement on that day:

"Our action today was just the beginning—we are serious when we say that we will shut down any casinos that open, and demonstrated our commitment this morning. We encourage the financial backers of SugarHouse and Foxwoods to reconsider the stability of these risky investments, but if any casinos do attempt to set up shop we are prepared to shut them down. At every



step of the way, cynical politicians and compromised regulators told us casinos were a 'done deal' -- but we know the real power rests with you, the people."

For updates see:  
<http://www.casinofreephila.org>

## Rally Against Prison Abuse in PA



On August 12th, the Philly chapter of the Human Rights Coalition pulled together their first rally against prison abuse in PA. Though not a huge crowd, the rally by all accounts was a huge success. Gathering just across the road from CFCF prison on State road, the protest set up shop next to the bus stop where visitors and the just released waited for rides back into the city. Representing at the rally were the various HRC chapters from Philly, Chester and Pittsburgh, the NAACP's PA prison project, Fight for Lifers as well as friends and relatives of prisoners, ex prisoners and

various other anti-prison organizers, many sharing first hand accounts of their dealings with a brutal prison system.

The protest was in response to demands for street from imprisoned members of the HRC, some of whom have within the last year faced brutal attacks, been thrown in the hole and denied crucial medical treatment, conditions which are more than familiar to the millions now locked up in US prisons.

For more info check out  
<http://hrcoalition.org>

## Taxi Worker's Alliance of Pennsylvania's Leader Acquitted

Ronald E. Blount, Chief of the 1,200 member Taxi Union was recently acquitted by a jury on charges of choking a woman during a dispute over using a credit card to pay for her fare from the airport. He offered to take her to an ATM to get cash, but she insisted on using a corporate credit card, so he reportedly told her "you just got a free ride." Blount admitted to violating Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA) taxi rules by not being equipped to handle credit in his cab, and to arguing with her. The Alliance has been in disagreement with the insistence that such equipment be installed as drivers have to pay for it and are charged for each use. However, he denied the allegations that he choked the fare and said that instead he helped her from the car when she fell backwards getting out. Despite claims that she had been choked, there was no evidence to support her allegations. The Alliance fights for taxi driver's rights and protections ; they have battled the PPA over the credit card system and the use of GPS (Global Positioning Tracking Systems)

which, again drivers have to pay to have installed and violates their privacy. Blount is glad to get back to his duties.

Check out the Taxi Workers Alliance at <http://www.twapa.org/>



## I read about it in the defenestrator!

Some stuff we really liked didn't make it in this issue for space reasons. So we put it on our web site for you to check out.

In particular, Hans Bennet passed on a number of good pieces and reviews including a review of defenestrator contributor Bob Helms' new book on Philly anarchist Chaim Weinberg. Kate Zaidan contributed a timely piece on Environmentalism in an Era of Green Capitalism, we also had more reports and reviews in the mix. While space is always tight on these pages, we're always amazed at just how much fits in the internet.

Check them out on our web site:  
[defenestrator.org](http://defenestrator.org)

Oh and, don't forget to read the **Communique from an Absent Future** from the students occupying the University of California in Santa Cruz

<http://wewanteverything.files.wordpress.com/2009/09/absentfuture.pdf>



# Union Victory for Art Museum Guards

By Sean West

In 1992 security guards at the Philadelphia Museum of Art had their union busted by Mayor Rendell who privatized what were once decent city jobs amidst the Philly budget crisis of the early 90's. Art Museum guards made \$14/hr back in 1992, in 2009 dollars that would amount to somewhere in between \$20-22/hr (1).

Security guards at the Philadelphia Museum of Art now work not for the city, but for AlliedBarton, a national firm that provides security services and to many major institutions in the region and nationwide. Today they are paid a wage of \$10.03/hr, which is hardly enough to scrape by.

Philadelphia Museum of Art have been doing something and it's starting to pay off. They've been organizing their own union in coalition with the Philadelphia Officers and Workers Rising campaign (POWR), a joint effort of rank and file security officers and Philadelphia Jobs With Justice.

Now after two years of talking to their co-workers, reaching out for support from other Philadelphians and mobilizing for rallies they can claim an important victory in their struggle for family sustaining wages, good benefits and dignity. On October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> art museum guards voted 68 to 55 to form an independent union, The Philadelphia Security Officers Union.

companies will throw into undermining a union organizing effort these days, it's a huge success that art museum guards now have a union. But these guards aren't going to stop here!

Now that AlliedBarton is legally obliged to bargain with them as the Philadelphia Security Officers Union they're going to keep organizing to fight for a good first contract that ensures better wages, benefits and working conditions.

We at the defenestrator hope to keep you up to date with all the good news that's to come and wish the best of luck to security guards organizing throughout the city with the POWR campaign.

But for two years guards at the Phil- With the amount of resources that

## Taking Action for Healthcare

On Tuesday, October 16th people angered over the lack of progress in the national healthcare debate took their message to the health insurance company Cigna's front doorstep in Center City. The rally organized by the Pennsylvania chapter of Health Care for America Now (HCAN), drew people supporting a government administered public option healthcare plan similar to Medicare that would be available and affordable for all Americans.

In an act of civil disobedience 5 people blocked the doors of Cigna in a 'death pile' to protest of the health insurance industries attempt to block any meaningful health care reform with it's army of DC lobbyists.

Among those who put their bodies on the line for health care reform was Joan Kosloff whose son Eric Aycox died as a result of a treatable case of meningitis, because he was uninsured.

Every day in America, an estimated 120 people die because as a result of being denied health care by an insurance company.

The Pennsylvania chapter of HCAN had this to say about their actions at the rally:

"We were arrested today because Joan Kosloff's son died as a result of a treatable case of meningitis because he could not afford health insurance...."

"We were arrested today because Dawn Smith is today fighting CIGNA for the treatment she needs. Dawn has a brain tumor. Doctors are ready to help her. But CIGNA has been blocking her from treatment for two years, while almost doubling her premiums. Last week CIGNA's pharmacy called Dawn to say that the co-pay on the medicine that helps controls her debilitating head pain is skyrocketing from \$10 to \$1,115. That's in addition to her premium of \$753 per month...."

"We were arrested today in front of CIGNA because injustice is here. And the injustice that is here is found everywhere in America today."

More information or to get involved:  
<http://blog.hcanpa.org/>

## Taking out some Rage on Cops and Corporations



What, \$2 for a fax?

Despite cops of every department from across the country along with the national guard invading Pittsburgh to protect the global elite in town for the G20 summit, some anti-capitalist protesters found the space to smash up some corporate and police property without getting caught.

By the time this hammer had met a FED EX window, police had spent the day chasing protesters through Pittsburgh, teargassing, arresting and beating any group they encountered. The police violence of course didn't help keep peace, instead only gave flesh to violence most of us experience daily under capitalism. By the end of the night one police mini-station managed to have every single pane of glass smashed out.

You can read about the rest of the activities against the g20 and capitalism on page 6.

## POWR Victories

*Over the last year, the Philadelphia Officers and Workers Rising campaign, a joint campaign of the Philadelphia Security Officers Union and Jobs With Justice, has won more than \$2 million in new wages and benefits for security guards all across the city.*

- 2005 The Student Labor Action Project (SLAP) at Temple forced Penn (via a petition drive and bad press) to reassign five security guard activists who were "suspended" and moved off of their posts for trying to organize.
- 2006 SLAP activists at U Penn forced the university and AlliedBarton to improve working conditions for the workers. Roving guards are no longer forced to have their shift change meetings in a garbage storage room beneath a Wawa. The University of Pennsylvania stated that the new worker facility was a "million dollar" improvement.
- 2007 After two years of activism, UPenn announced their new sick-day policy for AlliedBarton guards. AlliedBarton guards now get up to three days of paid sick leave. Pete Winebrake, Esq, helped the POWR campaign filed a class-action lawsuit against Robert Oakley, owner of Oakley Services. Mr. Oakley had a habit of missing the payroll, and stealing wages from his 80 security guards at a site in N. Philadelphia. These workers are now getting organized into a union!
- 2008 POWR won sick leave for the security guard at Temple University for the first time ever! Some UPenn guards win wage raises from \$9.80/hour to \$15/hour!
- 2009 Security guards at Philadelphia Museum of Art unionize with Philadelphia Security Officers Union!

## Don't Let them Take Another Salim!

Salim Shabbazz' story is not so different from that of Salim who writes for this paper; both grew up in the hood and got into some shit that like many black men in Philly with limited financial access has them on the fast track to prison.

But also like our Salim, this Salim has struggle in the family. Notably anti-prison activist, community organizer and all round Philly freedom fighter Waheeda Shabbaz. Waheeda has been on the front lines fighting for prisoners with AIDS, she worked on a Condom in Philly Jails Campaign in 2006 condoms being added to commissary items, she's also been active with Project TEACH, the Prison Re-Entry Health-Care Network, CHAMP and ACT UP among other things. Fighting for a dignified humanity inside of our dungeons has been Waheeda's fight for a long time. Now her own son is facing a life behind bars himself.

To cut to the chase, Waheeda and Salim need to raise \$15,000 for urgent legal costs. Salim is in on a million dollar bail and being accused of a drug robbery. Show your solidarity and if you can lend your support!

Read more here: <http://shabazzlegaldefense.blogspot.com/>

# The Budget We Got: Selling Philadelphia, selling us out

By Milena Velis and Bryan Mercer

Philadelphia is in crisis. People across the city are feeling the effects of the global economic downturn and wondering what the future will bring for them and their families. The city has finally resolved a long, drawn out, and deeply unsettling budgeting process, and it feels now like the dust has finally settled. But even though massive service cuts and layoffs are off the table for now, this economic crisis is far from over, and we in Philadelphia now have a clear idea of the kinds of solutions our city government is willing to present.

The lesson we can learn from a year of repeated deficit announcements, “civic engagement” budget workshops, and political negotiations, is that the poor and working people of the city are paying for this crisis. In a city rife with both wealth and poverty, it’s clear that our government’s primary agenda is to attract and protect business, and not to make sure that the wealth generated here meets the basic needs of Philadelphia’s residents. If the city government continues down the path it has chosen, it can only lead us to a broken state that exists to serve business need before public need, abandoning the interests of the majority of Philadelphians. The only solution to the crisis we are currently facing is an independent politics that addresses the real roots of our situation.

## Balancing the Budget on the Backs of Working and Poor People

Over the summer, Mayor Nutter spent months telling us that he would be forced to close every local library, recreation center, and public park in the city, lay off 1,000 police officers and 2,000 municipal workers, scale back trash collection to twice a month and turn 1,000 street lights to blinking, not to mention shutting down some of the city’s essential functions, such as the courts, the Commerce Department and the City Planning Commission. This “Plan C” or “doomsday” budget was on the table because the Republican controlled state legislature was holding off on approving Nutter’s first plan, consisting of a sales tax increase and a deferral on municipal worker’s pension payments. If the state didn’t approve these measures, Nutter told us, the city would be unable to close a \$700 million deficit projected over the next five years, and it would be forced to gut itself of several essential services.

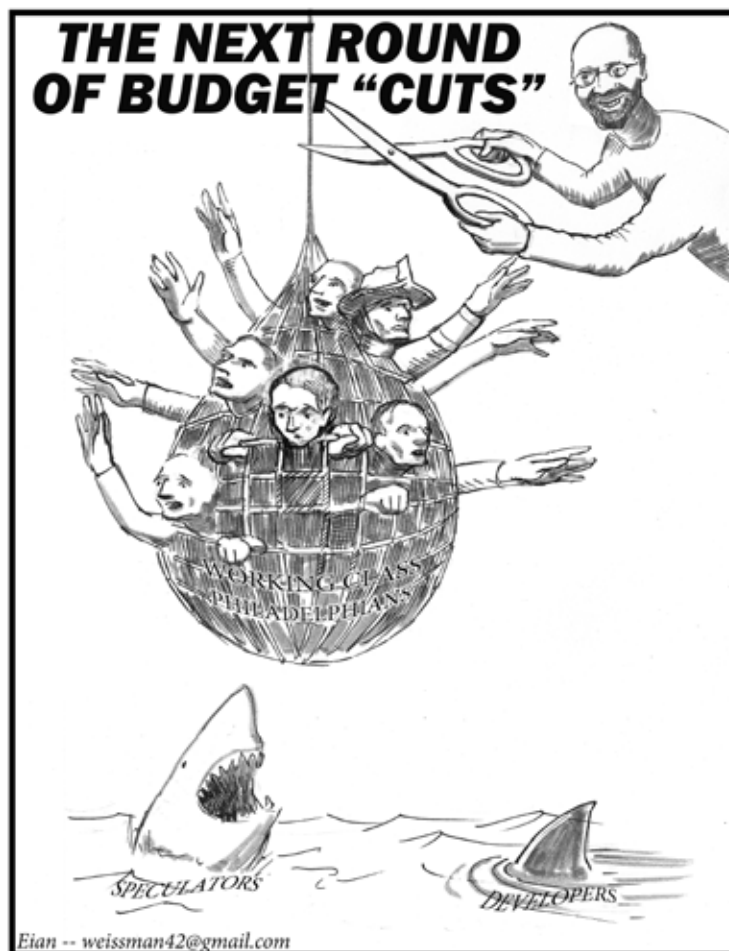
So, we didn’t get the “doomsday budget”, but what we did get is a significant political precedent for the tough years ahead. We also got two measures that balance the budget on the backs of those who can least afford it. In its own words, the city is “deferring” payments into the pension fund for municipal workers for 2 years, money which it is scheduled to pay back, with interest, in 2013. Basically, this amounts to the city

borrowing money from its own worker’s retirement fund to close its budget gap. This also will make the already unstable city pension fund even less viable down the road. At the same time, the city is currently in the midst of embroiled contract negotiations with its municipal employees.

Nutter also raised the sales tax temporarily from 7 to 8 percent, for the next five years. The last increase in the sales tax was also scheduled to last only five years, but was never rolled back. These increases may not seem like a lot, but they are but one of many, many measures that “fix” the economy by taking from those at the bottom. People who have plenty of resources may choose to shop elsewhere to avoid paying a tax that drops just outside the city limits. But what about those of us who are already barely getting by? A sales tax is a regressive tax, which means it takes a greater share of the resources of those who have less ability to pay, unlike other measures that distribute the tax burden according to wealth. The increases in sales tax may not seem like a lot, but they are just one of many, many measures that “fix” the economy by taking from those at the bottom.

In the fall of 2008, when the recession put Philadelphia in the red, Nutter spoke of the need for “shared sacrifice” in the face of plunging tax revenue and the declining value of the city’s investments in the stock market. But the option of businesses and the wealthy sharing the burden was never really on the table. From the beginning, the mayor’s plan put balancing the budget on a tight rope between levying regressive sales and property taxes, cutting city services that are used most by poor and working people, and scaling back city workers’ hard-earned benefits. And all of these plans pitted city workers against the financial security of the city. In “tough economic times”, the city’s answer is to take from those who can least afford it.

The contest over the budget between the state legislature and the city is nothing new. It’s become routine for both legislative bodies to be at odds about how the city should collect revenue, and about how much money the state allocates to the city. City Dems have tried to keep our eyes focused on the evils of their partisan opposition, but the hold up on the city budget is not just about



Republicans wanting to gain political points by putting Philadelphia’s back against the wall, or City Dems taking noble actions to defend the people’s interest. The measures that the city Dems asked for hurt the same people that would have felt the proposed massive service cuts. This set of solutions – regressive taxes, cuts to services, and cuts to city workers is an unprecedented combination. It is important to understand that the budget we did get calls for the sacrifices to come from city workers and the half of the city who is already struggling to put food on the table.

What about sharing the burden? All the options that the city kept off the table were ones that would have really done this. The city could have raised the real estate transfer tax, the tax on the buying of property. Nutter could also have put an end to the ten-year tax abatement, gaining millions of dollars of revenue from taxes on new construction. It could have increased the business privilege tax, the tax on business profit, but Nutter did not and of course big business praised the plan. The city could have also asked the state legislature to approve measures such as increasing property taxes with an exemption for the poor. But instead Nutter chose to increase a regressive tax, and then he asks us to be thankful that the state obliged.

## The Situation has Deep Roots

From suburbanization and middle-class flight to deindustrialization and job flight, municipalities across the country have been hit hard over the last 40 years. Local governments are seeing their revenue shrink, not just from the impoverishment of their own residents, but also because of declining federal and state revenue. As the residents of urban and rural districts suffered the loss of well paying jobs, governments at all levels

have responded by cutting funding to support even the basic needs of their people.

In Philadelphia, unemployment has almost doubled in the last two years, from 6.4% in June 2007 to 10.4% in June of this year. Philadelphia’s poverty rate is reported at 24% but is almost certainly higher, considering the current recession, and the fact that the official poverty rate has ignored many people for a long time. Job losses have been felt across the board, from bankers to bus boys, and for many it’s becoming harder and harder to stay middle class. Something is severely broken, and threats to services or sales tax hikes aren’t the extent of the problem, they are a sign that the problem is in fact much bigger.

## What else has been going on in our city?

When it comes to casinos, in Philadelphia local government has repeatedly failed to represent the interests of its own constituents, instead choosing to subvert its own democratic processes to hand Foxwoods and Sugar House millions of new customers, and millions of dollars in profit. This despite relentless resistance from communities across the city, despite the fact that casinos have been proven to be drains on local economies and are increasingly generating less revenue, and despite the fact that Foxwoods is in bankruptcy proceedings.

When it comes to healthcare, 13 maternity wards have closed in the last 12 years in Philadelphia, simply because there is no profit to be made off of delivering babies. At the start of the summer we also saw the closing of Northeastern Hospital, one of the few public hospitals left in the city that served a largely uninsured or Medicare-covered population. This closure was also blamed on a lack of profitability. Northeastern was run by Temple University Health Systems which received over \$100 million in state reimbursements for the treatment of those less affluent patients and posted a profit of \$16 million this year alone. Despite Temple being a publicly funded institution, and despite the mortal danger the public now faces as wait times and travel distances to emergency care soars, the state legislature did next to nothing to save it. All this while Democrats in Washington are selling out any chance for a real public health plan.

When it comes to education, Philadelphia’s public schools have been a testing ground for privatization in the past. Even with proposed reforms to the system, the district is now also facing a deficit, half of the city’s students don’t graduate, and the central strategy of the School District to “turn around” failing schools is to hand them over to any outside taker. In our city the whole of the economy seems turned against working and poor people.

The market crash of last September kicked off the loss of over 6.5 million jobs across the country. For most people who are wor-  
*continued on page 20...*



# In Defense of the Land: The Mill Creek Farm and Brown Street Community Garden Fight for Survival

By Jade Walker, co-director The Mill Creek Farm, with Suzy Subways

*"The Mill Creek neighborhood, like most poor communities, does not have ready access to fresh and healthy food products. This in large part is the reason residents in these areas have higher rates of obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and malnutrition.... Each year, adults and school children from all over the city visit the [Mill Creek] farm. Visitors learn about pollination through the bee hives, the dwindling bee population and what we can do as individuals to reverse this harmful trend. Classroom photosynthesis lessons are brought to life. They see first hand how a simple green roof can recover rain water and have a positive effect on slowing global warming.... Now is the time to replicate the Mill Creek Farm model in every community, not destroy it."*

—Charlie Baltimore, Dean of Students, High School of the Future

*"The [Brown Street Community Garden] has been around for 30 years (I remember when the houses caved in on that site and it was just an eyesore for many years) and it now brings much enjoyment to the community. My mother (now deceased), a country girl, had a space in the garden and planted much of the vegetables that eventually found their way to our dinner table. It brought such contentment to many of our senior citizens and lightened their food budgets. Now I am a senior citizen trying to raise my grandson who just turned 13 (my daughter is deceased) and trying to find everything imaginable to keep him occupied and out of trouble.... He spends as much time as possible with the [Mill Creek Farm] staff and he is learning about farming/gardening and he also helps set up the stand to sell the fruits of their labor."*

—Engrid R. Bullock, neighbor

In the 1970s an entire block of homes at 49th and Brown Streets in West Philadelphia were demolished because the Mill Creek runs under that land and the houses' foundations had been compromised. Soon after, neighbors occupied part of the site and started growing food, as many of their families had done for generations. Thus the Brown Street Community Garden was born. The rest of the lot was left vacant, attracting dumping and gradually becoming overgrown with weeds.

The land at 49th and Brown is owned by the City of Philadelphia through its Redevelopment Authority (RDA). The RDA leases the land to the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) as part of their storm-water management efforts. As part of this work, in 2005, PWD and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society invested City, State, and private funds in the creation of the Mill Creek Farm on the vacant portion of the land. The Mill Creek Farm (MCF) is an educational urban farm dedicated to improving local access to fresh produce, building a healthy community and environment, and promoting a just and sustainable food system.

Although RDA's lease with PWD is long-term, there is no security in the lease: it can be broken with only 30 days notice. This leaves both the garden and the farm in an incredibly precarious situation. Today, both the Brown Street Community Garden and the Mill Creek Farm are under threat of losing their land because the Philadelphia Housing Authority has long-term plans to develop it, despite the Tragic demolition in the 1970s.

Healthy communities need to have affordable housing as well as access to healthy, affordable food. Since the land was first granted to MCF, we have wanted to put it in a



land trust with the Neighborhood Gardens Association to preserve it as open space for growing food and promoting education in the community. In Philadelphia, City Council members have jurisdiction over all land transfers in their districts, concentrating power in the hands of few. For over a year, we have been organizing with our community in an effort to stave off eviction. We have received an outpouring of support: over 900 signatures on our petition and over 85 letters of support from neighbors, leaders of community organizations, community gardeners, and visitors to the farm, young and old. However we have still not received the support of our Councilwoman, Jannie Blackwell.

Mayor Nutter has laid out the so called Greenworks plan for Philadelphia to become the greenest city in America. There are efforts within the RDA, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Zoning Reform Commission to instate new land

**"Per capita, Philadelphia has the 2nd fewest grocery stores in the country: this lack of options is a form of oppression."**

## Help Save the Garden and Farm... and the City and the Earth!

Our immediate strategy for protecting the Mill Creek Farm and garden is to secure the support of the Mayor and his Office of Sustainability for this model of urban agriculture, education and sustainable land use. We're asking people to call the mayor and let every City Councilperson know that it is really important to support these projects of ours as they exist now, and to transfer the current land title into a land trust.

For the long-term, we hope to be part of building a cohesive, accountable movement all over the city for human rights: an agenda that includes affordable housing, food justice, healthcare, education, and more. This critical moment to secure our land for future generations is also an opportunity for us to strengthen our resistance by working together.

For more information on how to support the farm and garden, email [millcreekfarm@resist.ca](mailto:millcreekfarm@resist.ca), go to [www.millcreekurbanfarm.org](http://www.millcreekurbanfarm.org) or come visit the farm!

use practices to support these sustainability goals. The Mill Creek Farm and Brown Street Community Garden directly addresses most of the targets outlined in the plan, especially Bring Local Food within 10 Minutes of 75 Percent of Residents and Stormwater Management. (For more information, visit <http://www.planphilly.com/node/8804>.)

In the past, Philadelphia has had a horrible track record of destroying community gardens, which, in many cases are important to the social fabric of a neighborhood, to make way for development, or even the promise of development. Many Philadelphians are only one generation removed from growing their own food; there is a lot of culture being lost in the displacement of community gardens. Instead, the City should be protecting urban agriculture in accordance with the

Greenworks plan. We should be celebrating the fact that people are maintaining their culture, remaining active, saving money, and beautifying abandoned lots through community gardening.

## Youth and Elders at Work

*"Food prices in Philadelphia are 50% higher than the maximum food stamp benefits.... The gardeners at Brown Street are what we like to call 'engines of community food security.' They grow nutritious food and give much of it away."*

—Domenic Vitiello, President of the Philadelphia Orchard Project and a professor at the University of Pennsylvania

*"(From spending time at the Mill Creek Farm), I learned that it is fresher when you get it from a local farm instead of a supermarket. When I say farm I mean a neighborhood farm, not in California."*

*"I learned you don't have to use water to go to the bathroom. You can use sawdust, and six months later, it becomes soil."*

—Fourth graders from Folk Arts Charter School

There has been a consistent crew of gardeners, mostly seniors, who have maintained the Brown Street Com-

*continued on page 21...*

# G20 People's Caravan Report Back

We just got back from Pittsburgh after traveling across the state, connecting personally with some local struggles and participating in exciting actions and protests against our global ruling elite's neoliberal agenda. Despite a veritable police state in Pittsburgh, the time was inspiring and rewarding enough we felt we should send out this report back to those who couldn't make it. We also temporarily lost a caravaner who was wrongfully arrested while filming some of the police repression in the streets, so we're combining this with an urgent appeal for funds for his release!

## The People's Caravan:

The G-20 summit is a gathering of financial ministers and heads of states of the 20 richest countries in the world. They are held an exclusive meeting in Pittsburgh, September 24-25 to advance their agenda: cutting essential social services, privatizing schools, healthcare, and social security, and promoting "free-trade," which cuts labor and environmental standards across the globe and places corporate profit above human needs.

Pennsylvania, along with the rest of the world, is in crisis. Many people do not have access to decent housing, education, healthcare, jobs, healthy food, transportation and communication. While we are told that there are not resources to provide for our basic needs, bankers and the ultra-rich get trillions of dollars in bail-out funding, and our services are cut and costly wars are waged. From pools, libraries and health centers in urban areas closing, to factory lay-offs and families losing their farms, Pennsylvanians are feeling the impact of an economic and political system that has placed profit over people. We will not pay for their crisis!

We did not want to simply protest the G-20, we wanted to use this opportunity to focus on Pennsylvania, and strengthen our statewide networks in the hopes of strengthening our movements. We met up with people who are organizing locally for their dignity, a better Pennsylvania and a better world. Here is the report-back from our journey.

## Living in a Police State:

While thousands marched in Pittsburgh to demand an end to the G-20 agenda of neoliberal tyranny- our voices were also drowned out by a military weapon that the



Police deployed on the protesters called the LRAD, or Long-Range Acoustic Device. Thousands of Riot Police, coming from numerous states, as well as the National Guard repressed protesters using tear-gas, pepper spray, snatch squads, rubber bullets, batons, and the LRAD- which can cause permanent damage to hearing. For those who thought that policing under Obama may be less repressive, the state mobilized its full force to repress peaceful dissent. Among the many chants that called for a new economic system the change, "Tell me what a police state looks like...this is what a police state looks like" could be heard throughout the streets.

More info on the caravan:  
<http://g20caravan.info/node/7>

## York

From Philly to Pittsburgh, poor people across PA are being forced out of their homes and communities. We stopped at a trailer park and listened to moving stories of residents whose homes are being bought at a fraction of their worth to clear the land



for developers to come in and build more profitable town houses. The Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign has spent the last months working with organizers there to fight their eviction and support those who are trying to stay. A PPEHRC organizer on the caravan made the connection and we delivered some food from Philly as a token of solidarity.

More information:  
<http://economichumanrights.org>

## Harrisburg

The People's Caravan rallied on the Capitol steps to share stories of Pennsylvanians organizing in the face of the economic crisis. We demanded a state budget that supports social services and meets people's basic needs. Kensington Welfare Rights Union, the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, Students for a Democratic Society and Casino Free Philly all represented, speaking out about their own struggles and the budget.

## Melcroft

Next up on our tour were some gutsy rural organizers fighting against the devastation of the area's water by coal companies. Pollution caused by abandoned coal mines had killed a number of rivers and poisoned water sources in the area with heavy levels of iron and aluminum, affecting an area whose population is already struggling



with poverty. The Mountain Watershed Association who we visited, fought a number of successful battles against new coal mining projects, and together with the EPA led the creation of a constructed wetland to clean the polluted runoff, effectively giving new birth to streams which had for years seen no signs of life. Beverly, a local MWA organizer took us on a tour of a constructed wetland, used to clean mine-poisoned water, one of the group's organizing victories.

More information:  
<http://www.mtwatershed.com/>

## Pittsburgh

### ACT UP Shows up Early

On Tuesday, September 22nd at 6 am over 20 Philadelphians ventured ahead of the caravan to Pittsburgh on a six hour bus ride to join others from DC, New York, and Pittsburgh to protest the G-20. Organized by ACT UP Philadelphia in conjunction with other organizations, a funeral procession was held in which over 100 AIDS activists dressed in black demanded attention to global HIV/AIDS issues. The protest was high energy, protesters had solid messaging, and the speakers were strong. Police kept their distance and we got lots of press coverage.

More information:  
<http://www.critpath.org/actup/>

### Bail Out the People Tent City

From Sunday, September 20 to Friday, September 25 poor people's organizations from throughout the country joined the "Bail Out the People" tent city, held at the Baptist Monumental Church in the Hill District of Pittsburgh. In the face of foreclosures, evictions, unemployment and lack of housing and healthcare,



Bail out the People held a march for jobs and participated in a wide variety of forums, marches and protests at the G-20 Summit. The People's Caravan joined the tent city in the demands for economic human rights for all- and spent one evening camping out and joining the many grassroots and poor peoples' organizations.

## Thursday

Thursday, a number of our crew took part in an unpermitted march to the G20 meetings. The crowd of roughly 1000 started off in Arsenal park in high spirits despite an intimidating police presence. The short time our rowdy procession actually resembled a march we were a creative and colorful defiance to the quickly emerging police state forming in Pittsburgh. When our march reached police lines apparently unwilling to let us pass, it took sonic weapons and teargas to move us. The rest of the day police chased protesters through Pittsburgh neighborhoods, with liberal use of teargas, but relatively few arrests. Most of the caravaners wrapped it up early, tired of getting lost in Pittsburgh's labyrinth of hills and police. Undeterred and often combative, protesters regrouped several times well into the night standing up to the police violence and taking out bank and corporate windows as frustration with the police occupation grew. Already exhausted, we followed the action from the comfort of our base glued to the radio and following twitter updates from the streets.  
*continued on page 21...*



# Welcome to Pittsburgh



## Fallout from police repression at the G20 protests in Pittsburgh

**two friends of the defenestrator collective are looking at some serious legal situations**

### Trev

Trev, local autonomous cop watcher often admired for his laid back ghetto fashion edge, was jumped by an army of riot cops while filming an arrest during street confrontations. Police smashed his camera, beat Trev and locked him up. It hurt to leave him in Pittsburgh for a week, but he was refused bond, forcing a small group of people to raise \$15000 to get him out. As always happens when assaulted by police, Trev was charged with aggravated assault on an officer as well as other charges. While we're confident he'll beat these charges, Trev is facing years of prison and is looking at thousands in legal costs regardless of verdict. Since we've known him, Trev has been a solid, committed rebel who has stood up for others whether by documenting police harrasment his neighborhood, his movement videography, working against domestic violence in his community or through his work at a shelter.

Please support him by kicking down generously!!

You can donate to his defense by going to [defenestrator.org/free\\_trev](http://defenestrator.org/free_trev)

### Elliot

Elliot Madison, whose style of dress and demeanor may for some place him squarely in the thick of a Sherlock Holmes novel, was arrested for his role in the Tin Can Comms Collective, an autonomous communications collective who listened in on police scanners and spread news of police movements and spontaneous protest gatherings and actions via twitter to cell phones, helping many avoid situations of conflict with the police that the media had hyped ad nauseum leading up to the protests. Elliot was followed from a meeting to the hotel room from where him and others where tweeting, served with an 18 page warrant and held on \$50,000 bail, well before police had seriously attacked any protests. Elliot like Trev was also forced to pay the sum in full. The collective house where he lives put up their Queens home to get him out, only to be raided by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, days later in a 16 hour raid. Elliot is interestingly charged with the interstate rioting statute, a rarely used law which was used most famously against the Chicago 8 after the 1968 DNC.

You can support Elliot and Tortuga house by carefully following the instructions as spelled out here:  
<http://friendsoftortuga.wordpress.com/solidarity/>



## The Militarization of Pittsburgh: Street Report From the G20

**The G20 in Pittsburgh showed us how pitifully fearful our leaders have become.**

By Bill Quigley  
*from CounterPunch.org*

**T**he G20 in Pittsburgh showed us how pitifully fearful our leaders have become.

What no terrorist could do to us, our own leaders did.

Out of fear of the possibility of a terrorist attack, authorities militarize our towns, scare our people away, stop daily life and quash our constitutional rights.

For days, downtown Pittsburgh, home to the G20, was turned into a militarized people-free ghost town. Sirens screamed day and night. Helicopters crisscrossed the skies. Gunboats sat in the rivers. The skies were defended by Air Force jets. Streets were barricaded by huge cement blocks and fencing. Bridges were closed with National Guard troops across the entrances. Public transportation was stopped downtown. Amtrak train service was suspended for days. In many areas, there were armed police every 100 feet. Businesses closed. Schools closed. Tens of thousands were unable to work.

Four thousand police were on duty plus 2,500 National Guard plus Coast Guard and Air Force and dozens of other security agencies. A thousand volunteers from other police forces were sworn in to help out. Police were dressed in battle gear, bulky black ninja turtle outfits - helmets with clear visors, strapped on body armor, shin guards, big boots, batons, and long guns. In addition to helicopters, the police had hundreds of cars and motorcycles, armored vehicles, monster trucks, small electric

go-karts. There were even passenger vans screaming through town so stuffed with heavily armed ninja turtles that the side and rear doors remained open.

No terrorists showed up at the G20. Since no terrorists showed up, those in charge of the heavily armed security forces chose to deploy their forces around those who were protesting.

Not everyone is delighted that 20 countries control 80% of the world's resources. Several thousand of them chose to express their displeasure by protesting.

Unfortunately, the officials in charge thought that it was more important to create a militarized people-free zone around the G20 people than to allow freedom of speech, freedom of assembly or the freedom to protest.

It took a lawsuit by the Center for Constitutional Rights and the ACLU to get any major protest permitted anywhere near downtown Pittsburgh. Even then, the police "forgot" what was permitted and turned people away from areas of town. Hundreds of police also harassed a bus of people who were giving away free food - repeatedly detaining the bus and searching it and its passengers without warrants.

Then a group of young people decided that they did not need a permit to express their human and constitutional rights to freedom. They announced they were going to hold their own gathering at a city park and go down the deserted city streets to protest the G20. Maybe 200 of these young people

*continued on page 20...*

# Hell on Earth: U.S. Prisons

Rhetorically, the use of logic – facts, statistics, syllogisms – ethics and emotion to convince should have an effect on a reader or listener. Ideally, truth and knowledge produce responsibility and change. Yet in the U.S. the pronouncement of facts that should cause alarm, awareness and action are far too commonly met with resistance, scorn and a disregard for human and civil rights. In the conclusion to his damning report in The New Yorker “Hell-hole: Is Long-term Solitary Confinement Torture?”(30 March 2009) Atul Gawande writes “public sentiment in America is the reason that solitary confinement has exploded in this country, even as other Western nations have taken steps to reduce it...with little concern or demurral, we have consigned tens of thousands of our own citizens to conditions that horrified our highest court a century ago.” “In much the same way,” he continues, “that a previous generation of Americans countenanced legalized segregation, ours has countenanced legalized torture” - at home and abroad. And despite the many individuals, families, groups, lawyers and advocates (see list below) focusing tirelessly on abolition and prisoner’s rights, things have gotten progressively worse. Only a sea-change in values across larger swathes of our population will address and demand change to the horrors of our current system, which include the widespread use of solitary confinement, the use of excessive force on prisoners, particularly juveniles, the denial of necessary medical and mental health treatment, overcrowding, the canceling of work and education programs and the erosion of prisoner’s rights and recourse to address any of these problems.

## Prison Facts:

**The U.S. makes up 5% of the world’s population and 25% of its prisoners.**

**The vast majority of the world’s prisoners held in long-term solitary confinement are in U.S. Prisons.**

**The U.S. is the only country in the world that officially sanctions the juvenile death penalty.**

**The U.S. is alone in sentencing young teenagers to die in prison.**

**Over the past thirty years the U.S. quadrupled incarceration rates but not prison space.**

## Solitary Confinement

My younger brother spent much of his 20’s (the late 90’s early 2000’s; he’s now 33) in and out of jail for non-violent drug-related offenses. A basically gentle person who became a crack addict (he is currently out of prison, in recovery, engaged to be married, works as a cook and is studying to become an alcohol and drug counselor)

and did some stupid things. During one of his jail stints, he made the mistake of betting on a football game – something I see and hear people do all the time on the “outside.” For this mistake he was put in solitary confinement for 3 months.

“By the end of the nineteen-nineties,” writes Gawande, “some sixty supermax institutions had opened across the country. And new solitary-confinement units were established within nearly all of our ordinary maximum security prisons.” The decision to put a prisoner in solitary – for months or years - is at the arbitrary whim of prison administrators. It can be for a major offense – violence against a prison worker or another prisoner – or a minor infraction – laughing at a guard, for instance, or betting on football. One prisoner Gawande interviewed was put in solitary for not getting out of the shower quickly enough. Those who do “favors” for guards are more likely to avoid it; those who refuse such pressures are more likely to get it.

In solitary the prisoner is put in a very small, often windowless, concrete cell. Once or twice a week, my brother told me, he was handcuffed and dragged naked down a hall to a solitary shower. Several times, again depending on the whim of whoever was in charge, he was led to a small concrete outdoor area for a very short period of time; some prisons put inmates in outdoor cages, of the kind we’ve seen hooded prisoners in in Guantanamo. He lost track of time, became disoriented and fell into a state of depression despite attempts to focus on reading and positive memories. Super maxes also use food as

punishment – feeding prisoners just enough of a horrible, inedible “nutrablok” to keep them alive. Three months is a relatively “short” period of time (though a 2006 report, cited by Gawande, from the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons concluded that after 10 days there are no benefits and much harm – the report advocated an end to the use of solitary) but prisoners often have a hard time readjusting in general population and any new “infraction” could get them back in. The fear of getting put back in and of the loneliness he experienced there, had him in a state of constant anxiety and panic, a common feature of those who experience solitary. According to the website for Mental Health Alternatives to Solitary Confinement “solitary confinement is known to cause mental breakdown in normally healthy individuals. For people with psychiatric conditions, it can only be called torture, with self-injury, and, sadly, suicide being the all-too-common result.” Reason then tells us that normally healthy individuals put in solitary can become mentally unstable from the experience.

Possible effects of solitary confinement are: permanent psychological damage, brain trauma, severe withdrawal, hallucinations, acute psychosis, thought disintegration, irrational anger and revenge fantasies and severe depression. Prisoners of War or hostages kept in solitary confinement for long periods of time typically experience life-long difficulties from the experience, often requiring psychiatric treatment and/or hospitalization, sometimes permanent. Notes Gawande: “A U.S. military study of almost a hundred and fifty naval aviators returned from imprisonment in Vietnam...

*continued on page 19...*

# A Victory for Movement for Justice in El Barrio Most Powerful Landlord in East Harlem, Multi-National Dawnay, Day Group, Comes Crashing Down

*from Movement for Justice in El Barrio*

October 14, 2009—In a battle of David and Goliath proportions, tenants and members of Movement for Justice in El Barrio fought back against the attempts of the multi-billion dollar London-based corporation Dawnay, Day Group to push low-income families from their homes.

Thousands of East Harlem tenants have just been notified that the 47 buildings they reside in have been seized, due to Dawnay, Day’s failure to pay its massive outstanding debts, and are now under receivership, completing the demise of this multi-national company, a powerful threat to the community of El Barrio.

The multinational corporation that had scooped up 47 buildings in East Harlem, controlling one of the largest private property collections in Manhattan and by far the largest in East Harlem, is going down. Worldwide, Dawnay, Day has fallen victim to its own greed and is selling off its properties to cover its debt.

The East Harlem community has outlasted the giant through a multi-pronged strategy of resistance. This news comes close on the heels of a groundbreaking legal victory in a case filed by Movement for Justice in El Barrio concerning thousands of dollars in false charges that were tormenting low-income tenants. Through this case, Movement for Justice in El Barrio partnered with Manhattan Legal Services and NEDAP to employ the innovative use of consumer protection laws for the first time in the housing arena with great success. Members of Movement for Justice in El Barrio just signed a settlement that will benefit thousands of tenants by putting an end to the practice of charging tenants thousands of dollars in false

and illegal charges, instituting a new 3% cap on late fees for all tenants, and the plaintiffs receiving monetary damages, among other victories.



When Dawnay, Day became the most powerful landlord in East Harlem with their immense purchase, they announced in an interview with the Times of London their plan to take advantage of lax tenant protection laws in NYC to raise rents by “tenfold”, a massive rent hike that would only be possible by evicting the current low-income and immigrant families from their homes. Again, they made their intentions explicit when they launched

their “Buy-back Program” and began pushing tenants to abandon their apartments for a lump sum of \$10,000. They coupled what amounts to measly and misleading offers in today’s NYC rental market with severe harassment in the form of dangerous

negligence to the physical conditions of the buildings and apartments and illegal efforts to collect fictitious debts.

Movement for Justice in El Barrio fought back against their efforts by

- Filing a groundbreaking legal suit and recently winning a major victory that challenged Dawnay, Day Group, for charging thousands of dollars in false fees to its tenants.

- Launching the “International Campaign in Defense of El Barrio” and traveling to London to organize action to take them on at their headquarters.

- Fighting back building by building to demand decent living conditions and halt illegal evictions and maintaining a sustained media campaign exposing Dawnay, Day’s harassment.

Movement for Justice in El Barrio will continue the struggle for dignity and against displacement with more strength and energy than ever before.



# AIDS is not in Recession

## AIDS Policy in the Obama Era

When President Obama took office in 2009, AIDS activists celebrated the historic occasion. The first black president, the first president to have been a community organizer, is also the first president to come to office with an AIDS plan. It was activist pressure that spurred the president to release his ambitious plan on the campaign trail, and it will be activist pressure that helps him live up to it. Nearly a year into Obama's presidency, it is time to look back on the development of the plan and take stock of where we are in implementing it.

Two years ago, when then-candidates Obama, Biden, and Clinton came to Philadelphia for the Democratic Presidential Debate, they had not yet released plans for combating AIDS domestically and around the world. They were met by over 500 people with HIV and their allies demanding the release of the plans. Less than a month after the rally, each candidate had a plan to fight AIDS that promised to expand access to HIV treatment and prevention in the US and around the world. They pledged to invest \$50 billion over five years in global AIDS programs, lift the ban on immigration and travel for non-US citizens with HIV coming to America, allow funding of family planning programs abroad, and encourage access to generic medication. Their plans detailed a domestic AIDS strategy that would increase funding for AIDS housing and treatment, lift the federal ban on funding syringe exchange, and end funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage sex education. In short, their plans were ambitious, evidence-based, and, when fully implemented, would have gone a long way towards ending the AIDS crisis. When President Obama was elected in November of 2008, 1,000 people gathered in DC to show President Obama that he had the support of people with HIV to implement his AIDS plan. Flash forward to one year later. How is President Obama doing in keeping his promises to fight AIDS?

### In the US:

President Obama made a clear commitment to remove language banning funding of syringe exchanges from his federal budget proposals. Syringe exchange programs are proven to reduce HIV infection dramatically without increasing drug use. They are the best intervention available to prevent injection drug users from becoming infected with HIV. But when Obama released his draft budget for 2010, the ban was still in place. AIDS activists responded and called on Congress to do what Obama didn't do: remove the funding ban from the budget. The House of Representatives has removed the ban, but funding is restricted in such a way that almost no syringe exchanges in urban areas could receive federal funding. The Senate has maintained the ban on funding of syringe exchange. Activists are calling on Congress to fully lift the ban, and not restrict funding of syringe exchange in

any way.

On the other hand, Obama's budget did remove all federal funding from harmful, stigmatizing and homophobic abstinence-only-until marriage sex education programs. For years, the US government has funded these programs to the tune of nearly \$200 million per year, and all that they've gotten in return is growing rates of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Congress so far has agreed with Obama and left all funding for abstinence-only sex education out of the budget.

About half of people with HIV and AIDS will deal with homelessness at some point in their lives. For people with HIV, being homeless can mean death or serious illness. President Obama had promised to increase funding for the federal Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) programs, but his budget did not increase funding at all. Thankfully, Congress did the right thing and increased funding for these life-saving programs, but not enough to meet the growing need.

In the US, HIV+ people who are too "rich" to qualify for Medicaid, but do not have private insurance, are eligible to have their treatment and care funded by a stop-gap funding stream called Ryan White (named for an HIV+ young man who fought against the stigma of being diagnosed with AIDS until his death in 1990). These programs have been historically underfunded by nearly \$600 million, but President Obama only included a \$54 million increase in funding in his budget. The result of underfunding is that hundreds of people in a handful of states are on waiting lists for AIDS drugs. In 2003, the last time there was a sizable AIDS drug waiting list in the country, people died waiting for treatment.

### Around the World:

Obama promised to spend \$50 billion over five years to global AIDS efforts, more than double the amount invested in the previous decade. But his first budget did not increase global AIDS funding. As a result, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria is facing a critical \$5 billion funding shortfall and has not launched a new funding round in over a year. The President's Emergency Plan



for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program had intended to double the number of people receiving treatment, but few new people have been added to treatment rolls because there is no new funding. Expansion of PEPFAR to include tuberculosis, malaria and the training and retention of health workers is impossible without increased funding, but Congress has only added a miniscule amount of additional funding for these programs.

President Obama did take an important step this year to change a stigmatizing and unfounded policy that bars any person living with HIV from traveling to or immigrating to the US. This policy has been in existence since the late 80s, when right-wing Christians advocated it to "keep gay people out of the country." At this time, the Department of Health and Human Services is considering public testimony and should lift the travel and immigration ban by the end of the year, if all goes according to plan.

Additionally, on his first day in office, President Obama ended a policy that existed under President Reagan and both Presidents Bush that barred international funding for any organization that performs abortions, or even discusses abortion as an option. Regardless of how one feels about abortion, it is clear that denying funding to rural African clinics results in less access to healthcare and more death for poor people. Obama's decision to change this failed policy will help ensure that clinics that provide reproductive health services receive funding to provide much-needed healthcare.

President Obama promised to reform US trade policy, and push for trade deals that expand access to low-cost generic ver-

sions of patented medication in developing countries. Introducing competition is the only way to reduce the cost of medicine to an affordable level. But the drug companies are fighting hard to keep their patents, even though they make only a tiny percentage of their windfall profits in developing country markets. Right now, it looks like they're winning. The US Trade Representative, appointed by President Obama, has previously supported the interests of drug company profits over people's lives, and is continuing a Bush-era policy of punishing countries that seek to access generic versions of patented medications through legal means.

Why haven't many of these promises, especially those involving funding, been kept? If you ask the Administration, they'll tell you that there just isn't enough money right now, and that other issues are taking precedence. AIDS activists see this as nothing more than an excuse to go back on promises. If \$9 trillion can go to bail out banks, then why is it that less than 1% of that amount can't be found to provide lifesaving prevention, care and treatment to people with HIV in the US and worldwide? President Obama and Congress are acting like this is just another issue that can wait until after the recession ends. But HIV is not in recession. Millions of people continue to be infected with HIV every year, including 65,000 in the US alone. The longer the US waits to enact policies that will end AIDS, the more people will die of a preventable, treatable virus.

For more information: <http://www.actupphilly.blogspot.com>

# Bagging For Obama

by Robert Saleem Holbrook

The joke started to circulate throughout the prison amongst staff shortly after Obama won the election. To accommodate President Obama and his family, the rose garden was being removed and replaced by a watermelon garden. Ha Ha. Since Obama’s election a undercurrent of racism has been behind much of the opposition to his agenda. Nowhere is this more evident than in the “tea party” protests that have been mobilized around the country the past couple months, culminating in a large march in September on the U.S. Capital where protesters held up huge pictures depicting Obama as an african witch doctor, hung up caricatures of Obama being lynched and waved banners urging Obama to go back to Africa. When these racist props were identified by observers as evidence of the racism that is driving this ‘tea party’ movement, supporters of the tea party rallies claimed these props did not represent the majority of the opposition and stated that the tea party movement was rooted in a historical American tradition of opposition to tyranny of government. The Right also compared the tea party protests to the Left’s protests against the administration of former President Bush.

I beg to differ. The tea party movement and the Left’s opposition to the administration of former President Bush are rooted in historical American traditions however these two traditions are as distinct as night and day. The protests of the Left against the administration of former President Bush was rooted in an American tradition dating back to the Left’s opposition to World War 1 led by anti-war and socialist activists at the beginning of the 20th century. This tradition peaked during the late 60’s as opposition to the Vietnam war united diverse sectors of American society and contributed to the American withdraw from Vietnam. The tradition was revived at the beginning of the 21 st century when former President Bush insisted on waging an unnecessary and unjustified war on Iraq. The massive crowds that took to the streets opposed to former President Bush were marching against injustice and a war of aggression based on a lie. It was to save lives and prevent mass murder.

By contrast, the Right’s tea party protests are rooted in another American tradition. It is the tradition of the lynch mob and nightriders that terrorized minorities, immigrants, women and anyone else who threatened the status quo. The mentality driving the tea party protests is the same mentality that was responsible at one time in American history for lynching minorities from trees and bombing churches for registering minorities to vote. The recent undercover stings by right wing activists against ACORN were not about exposing corruption or fraud but rather was to punish ACORN for successfully mobilizing minorities and the poor to vote and have a

voice in the political process. These tactics along with the tea party protests have all the visceral flavor of massive klan rallies minus the white sheets and hoods. The protesters at these rallies are correct when they shout they want to “take America back!”. They want to return to the days when terror and fear kept minorities, the poor and anyone different or who possessed a different vision for America in their place.

Another contrast between the protests of the Left and Right is who is behind the mobilization of these protests and rallies. Unlike the Left, whose opposition was grassroots, the Right’s tea party protests are supported, coordinated and mobilized by a national news network (FOX News Channel) as well as right wing radio. They are financed by corporate America opposed to change that would threaten their profits. The tea party protesters and the disruptive mobs that are working to kill universal health care are in effect acting as the storm troopers of the extreme right, fighting hard to prevent real change.

The Obama administration must be perplexed at the scope and aggression of this angry white popular protest. These are the same type of people the administration reached out to following the election by appointing “responsible” and “moderate” cabinet members (Hillary Clinton, Defense Secretary Gates, Treasury Secretary Summers, etc.) to send the message he was not a radical and even continued many of the policies of Bush in Iraq and Afghanistan, ostracizing the Leftist base that got him elected. How did the Right reward him? By pursuing radical opposition tactics to his agenda. Obama had a mandate for change but he squandered it by removing from the table the one thing that the Right feared, the pursuit of radical change! Once that was pulled from the table, Obama lost leverage and lowered himself to the mundane ground of moderate politics where the Right thrives. Instead of having the Right on their heels defending their obsolete politics the Obama administration is on their heels defending an agenda the vast majority of the American people embraced.

It should come as no surprise that once again the Right has resorted to the politics of fear as a tool of opposition or policy. What is surprising is that a small, but significant, portion of the rural white working class continue to shoot themselves in the foot by aligning with right wing politicians, backed by corporations, who could care less about the interests of the working man and women. It is their belief in their skin color as privilege that allows them to be so easily used and manipulated against themselves. It is far easier to rouse the emotions and anger of people against Obama when these people already possessed deep seeded dislike and distrust of minorities in general. Since the majority of them already believed the government benefited minorities at their expense, to see a minority now at the head of the government presents an inviting

target for their collective hate. It is this hate that fuels their opposition.

It is too soon into Obama’s presidency to determine if this hate based opposition can sustain itself and carry the Right to victory in the 2010 mid-term elections or the 2012 general election. Opposition built on hate is difficult to sustain, the intensity of emotions tend to wear down over time. Yet this opposition should be not overlooked because after it wears down extreme hate groups (militias, KKK, etc.) usually spring up in its wake as disillusioned individuals gravitate towards them and resort to violence to compensate for their inability to roll back minority gains. A return to the militia and skinhead violence of the 1990’s is a real possibility and with the government more concerned about so-called Islamic, Anarchist and Environmental terrorists the extreme right could have a relatively free hand carrying out acts of violence. For

all the talk about Leftist terrorists (BLA, Weather Underground) by the Right many people forget that with the exception of 911, the extreme right has been responsible for the most deaths by terrorism in the United States and unlike Leftist militants in the 60’s and 70’s who targeted the police and symbols of the state in armed confrontations the extreme right has exclusively targeted unarmed and defenseless individuals. In the end their degree of hate is only exceeded by their degree of cowardice.

September 25, 2009

Robert Saleem Holbrook #BL-5140  
SCI-Greene  
175 Progress Drive  
Waynesburg, PA 15370

## IBtheMC- aka IB the thuro-bred

by seedless

In a time of fiscal crisis and poor leadership we find a noble character with a vision of resistance, discovering solutions where others only see problems. IBtheMC (not to be confused with IB4eva, host of the gathering) a Native Philadelphian discovered his gift for music particularly rap/hip-hop early on. At the age of six, with the help of his mother he learned his first rap, by age nine he had begun to appear in local showcase’s and talent shows. However like many urbanites he fell victim to negative elements in the community which led him astray from his path of music, and in to repeated confrontations with police, culminating in his being tried as an adult at age 16 and incarcerated for over a year as an adult.

The sobering experience of jail left IB with a fire to take his life in a new direction. Volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club in the Kensington section of the city, he started upon his journey to make a difference in the community spending time with youth in an after school program. It was while working in this program that he begun to use Hip Hop style chants to help focus the students during various activities. In seeing the ability of rap music to inspire and captivate the attention of what can “sometimes” be a tough crowd, Ib’s vision began to formulate. Soon after this he began to work with the Ameri-corps program where he was placed in a public school as a teacher’s aid.

This direct involvement in the school proved to be just the opening he needed to implement his vision, a class in school where kids can write and develop raps that have a positive message of healing and education. I had a chance to meet one of the parents who’s told me how her daughter had been transformed through this project from “a shy girl who wouldn’t even go out to play with others, to a socialite involved in as many extracurricular activities as time allowed”. He is currently working at Belmont charter school and to date Ib has taught over 200 students to “rap”, organizing several showcases collaborating with community events to showcase the talents and insights of the youth throughout Philadelphia.

He’s also got an album out called “OPERATION FREEDOM.” featuring production by Mike Lo, Scott Storch, and Colin Green. This is not the work of a new-b this is Philadelphia soul-hiphop at its roots, aggressively addressing issues of a day-to-day life and



death struggle while still keep’n the crowd moving! IB is currently in the studio working on his next project, though there is no release date yet though he teases saying the album might be called IbtheMC “Save the Blacks,” mocking rap mogul Jay-z’s “Fade to Black.” A few of the new tracks “chill on saturday” as well as some of the older “rhode island” can be found on the web @ www.myspace.com/ibthemc (p.s. if you look on that page there are a few videos of his students performing.)

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# Out of the Frying Pan, into the Fire: Why Public-Private Partnerships are NOT the answer to Philadelphia's Budget Crisis

*On November 6th, 2008, Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter announced his plan to make sweeping cuts to public services in Philadelphia. The plan, ostensibly designed to address a 100 million dollar budget deficit caused by the economic crisis, called for the closure of 11 public libraries and 68 public pools. Also on the chopping block were fire stations, drug and violence prevention programs and 800 city jobs. Faced with mounting grassroots opposition to the cuts in general and library closures in particular, Mayor Nutter then proposed that some of the libraries slated for closure could be reopened as privately administered "knowledge centers." These "knowledge centers" would be managed by private foundations, nonprofits and corporations and would no longer employ city workers. Fortunately, massive public pressure forced the mayor to keep the 11 libraries open and public (at least for now). However, the mayor's plan to privatize the libraries was not the first, and will certainly not be the last time politicians have tried to sell out the people through the creation of public-private partnerships.*

Local and national governments are using the economic crisis as justification for stripping money from already underfunded public services. Claiming their hands are tied, politicians are offering up privatization and public-private partnerships, along with massive budget cuts, as the solution to fiscal shortfalls. This new attack on public services is only the latest move in a decades-long effort to dismantle the social safety net and transfer government functions to the private sector. We have seen this happening across party lines, from Reagan's "trickle-down" economic policies in the 80's, Clinton's welfare "reform" in the '90s, Bush's inflation of military spending at the expense of social programs and now Obama's decision to bail out the bankers on the taxpayer's dollar. Instead of redistributing wealth downwards to those struggling to make ends meet,

the government is redistributing it upwards to corporate shareholders and the already-rich in the form of billions of dollars in federal bailouts, tax breaks and public-private partnerships that favor investors and leave city residents with nothing. If banks are given billions while libraries are being shuttered and public services gutted or auctioned off, the theory that these deliberate transfers of wealth to the top will eventually "trickle-down" to the rest of us is a joke. It is clear that the only people advancing this theory are those benefiting from its predictable failure.

Public-private partnerships are part of a larger strategy to turn communities into "investment opportunities." They allow city government to prioritize funding the development of a "healthy" business environment that guarantees profits for corporations instead of investing in long-term community needs like good public schools, job training programs that work, strong neighborhood branch libraries, reliable health clinics and other social services. The attack on public services is, at its heart, an attack on poor and working people's ability to survive in this city. The combination of little or no access to adequate services with rising real estate prices caused by state-corporate development plans often forces low income people out of their neighborhoods or out of the city altogether.

Communities are suffering from the global economic meltdown and are in urgent need of public infrastructure and services. Public-private partnerships are not designed to address these needs. Instead, they undermine transparency, oversight, accountability and local control by taking decision-making power out of the public's hands and putting it into private shareholder's pockets. We cannot allow our essential services, such as health care, education and libraries, to be subject to the whims of the market because the market cannot and will not create healthy communities.

## What is Privatization?

Privatization is the sale or transfer of something from the public sector to the private sector. For example, if a government owns the subway system but the government sells that subway system to a private corporation; that is privatization. Privatization can happen to any publicly owned business, industry or service.

## What are Public-Private Partnerships?

Public-private partnerships are a specific type of privatization where the government and a private entity (usually a corporation) own, fund or run something together. There have been public-private partnerships for many things, including real estate development, schools, toll-roads, utilities and trash collection.



## Why are governments interested in public-private partnerships?

- **Short-Term Financial Gains:** Governments claim that public-private partnerships allow cash-strapped cities to save time and money while making services more efficient or creating development projects that neither the public nor private sector would undertake on their own. Selling city services and other public assets to corporations can generate revenue for the city in the short-term, which is especially crucial when trying to pass an annual budget. Politicians are able to receive recognition and good press for announcing new projects but are not accountable for the long-term costs.
- **Increased Private Investment:** As industrial production moved overseas and the federal government decreased funding to cities, local governments put their faith in attracting private investment in order to raise money. Philadelphia is competing with cities across the country for increased private investment in the form of real estate development and corporate headquarters. Offering corporations the opportunity to partner with the city on development projects is one way that the city entices private investment. When Comcast, the largest cable operator in the United States, decided to expand in Center City Philadelphia, the project received 42.75 million dollars in financial incentives from the state.<sup>1</sup> This investment is not only intended to expand the city's tax base, but it also creates sections of the city that are attractive to wealthier residents and tourists.
- **Politicians and Their Friends Cash In:** There is a long tradition of government officials working as consultants both before and after they are in office for the very same companies that they award contracts to while in government. Politicians have an enormous amount of power to grant large city contracts to companies owned by their friends, family members and potential employers.



## Why is the private sector interested in public private partnerships?

- **Taking on Less Risk:** Public-private partnerships often mean that the public will subsidize the cost of a project or service, making it easier for corporations to make more money quickly. The corporations make money if the project is successful but the city will bear the consequences if it fails.
- **New Opportunities to Make Money:** When the government starts a public-private partnership, whether it's deciding who can receive food stamps, treat sewage, or run a swimming pool, it opens up a new market and an opportunity for a private company to profit from a service that used to be the responsibility of the government. A private company might make money by charging people who use the service, by being paid by the government to provide that service, or by doing both.
- **Informal Control Over Government Policy:** Once corporations collaborate with the government they are more easily able to influence decisions the government makes. This might mean they are able to change zoning regulations or lower environmental standards. In some cases they are even able to assume some of the powers traditionally reserved only for the government. For example, real estate developers have worked with local governments to use the power of eminent domain to force people to leave their homes so that developers can use the land to build something else.
- **Promotional Opportunities:** Public-private partnerships create branding opportunities for corporations. Citizens Bank Park, the Wachovia Center and the Blue Cross River Rink all serve as huge advertisements for these businesses.

## What's wrong with public-private partnerships?

- **No Accountability:** Corporations have little incentive to be accountable to city residents. Though we don't have much control over what the government does, politicians at least depend on their constituents for reelection. The same can not be said for corporations, who are accountable to their shareholders first and the well-being of the city second, if at all. As public projects are turned into public-private partnerships it becomes more difficult for residents to hold either politicians or corporations responsible for providing quality services.
- **No Transparency:** Unlike government files, private companies are under no legal obligation to open their records to the public, leaving residents in the dark about how their tax dollars are being spent. The closed door negotiations that typically happen between city governments and private corporations can lead to pay-to-play politics or deals that overestimate costs and charge the city more. Ultimately the city can get caught up in lengthy contracts that become nearly impossible to get out of, even if a company is providing substandard services.
- **No Oversight:** Once private corporations control services, the government usually provides very little oversight. There are many examples that demonstrate that profit driven companies are not capable of providing consistent, quality services. In April 2009, 4 owners and 4 employees of a private social services agency in Philadelphia were charged with criminal neglect in the starvation death of Danieal Kelly, a teenage girl with cerebral palsy. The city of Philadelphia had awarded the company a \$1 million per year contract to provide in-home services to low-income people with disabilities. Even though the Department of Human Services was notified several times over the three years leading up to her death that the company was not actually visiting homes, the department continued to renew their contract.<sup>2</sup>
- **Costs Increase:** There are a series of hidden costs associated with public private partnerships, including "writing and negotiating the contract, processing change orders and amendments to the contract, monitoring and evaluating vendor performance, dealing with disputes and processing payment to the vendor [which] can add up to 25% to the cost of the contract."<sup>3</sup> In the short-term it might appear as though governments are saving or earning money, but in the long-term cities often come out behind. Immediate costs to the public may also increase because private corporations will often start charging fees for services that were previously free.
- **Conditions for Workers Decline:** Decades of organizing for civil rights and workers rights have forced the public sector to offer higher wages, benefits and more inclusive hiring practices. As local governments are looking for ways to cut costs, they want to eliminate these city jobs and outsource them to private companies. When corporations take over city services, workers are often no longer protected by unions. As a result, corporations are able to slash wages, reduce or eliminate benefits and hire fewer workers to do more work. This results in even fewer stable jobs, which leads to increased unemployment and less revenue for wage taxes, ultimately costing the city and our communities.
- **Loss of Local Control:** Not only do public-private partnerships shift wealth away from the public and into private companies, they also move decision making power over city services further out of reach of city residents. Corporations make decisions in order to increase profits for themselves and for those who have invested in their company. The majority of their investors do not live in the cities where the corporations operate and are not dependent on the services provided. Private companies are not designed to consider residents' input or community needs. Rather, it is *illegal* for them to make decisions that do not maximize company profits for their shareholders.





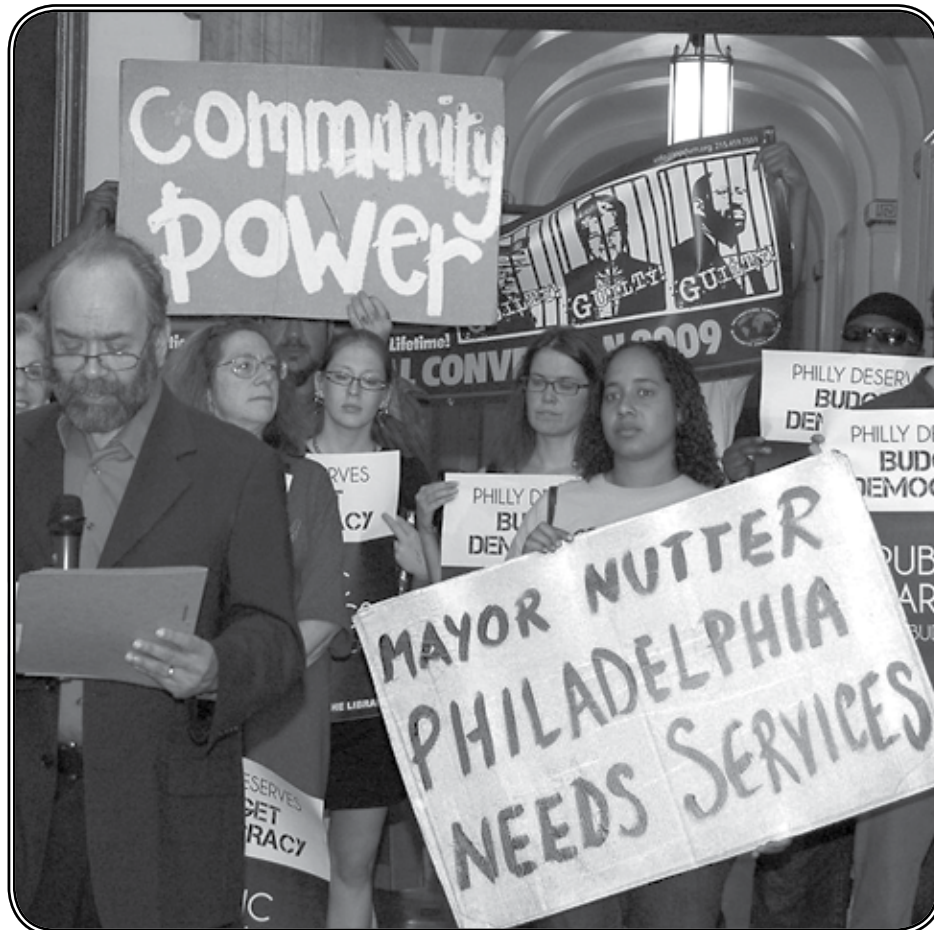
**Already, public-private partnerships have hurt both Pennsylvania and the nation as a whole. Below are just a few examples of the corruption, mismanagement and rampant spending that plague public-private partnerships.**

## **Selling Children Short**

*The public education system is looked at by many as a \$600 billion industry, and although many areas have great public schools (usually the wealthier suburbs), 'public education' (read the education of poor and minority students) is associated with failure, leaving the door open for reforms that in turn suffer a lack of accountability and transparency in the way they are implemented.*

—Dan Jones, Philly Student Union<sup>4</sup>

In 2002, the state of Pennsylvania took over 45 of Philadelphia's lowest performing public schools and promptly turned them over to seven for-profit and non-profit corporations. This unprecedented act of privatization occurred in response to looming fiscal problems and the failure of public schools to meet state and national standards, and made Philadelphia the testing grounds for private management of public schools. The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act created further incentive to privatize "failing" schools by presenting school privatization as a way to avoid losing federal education funding. Now Education Management Organizations (private companies that usually run for-profit schools) run 38 schools in Philadelphia. These EMOs receive between \$500 and \$700 extra dollars per student from the school district but demonstrate no better results than public schools receiving less funding.<sup>5</sup> In fact, 16 of Philadelphia's EMO-run schools are now considered failing schools themselves. Nevertheless, in the 2007–2008 school year alone, EMOs in Philadelphia received \$10.8 million of taxpayer money for their substandard services.



## **Crime and Punishment**

*There have been huge increases in police and court powers over all our lives. Poor people of color continue to lose power. And prisons have failed to cut crime. They have instead led to more racism, poverty and sexism. Our communities only become weaker when we use punishment to solve our problems.*

—Critical Resistance<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps one of the most egregious examples of public-private partnerships gone awry are the Pennsylvania judges charged with taking huge kickbacks from private corporations for unjustly sentencing juveniles to long sentences in private prisons. Luzerne County Judges Mark Ciavarella and Michael Conahan took \$2.6 million in payoffs between 2003 and 2006 to put juvenile offenders in private detention centers run by Pennsylvania Child Care and a sister company, Western Pennsylvania Child Care. An estimated 5,000 juveniles have been sentenced by Ciavarella since the scheme started in 2002. Among the offenses that resulted in months-long sentences were stealing loose change from cars, mocking an assistant principal on a MySpace page, and helping a friend steal DVDs from Wal-Mart.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to jailing the youths, the judges also admitted to helping "facilitate" the construction of private jails. First, the judges helped these private detention centers land a county contract worth \$58 million. Then, their alleged scheme was to guarantee the operators a steady income by detaining juveniles, often on petty transgressions. With Judge Conahan serving as president judge in control of the budget and Judge Ciavarella overseeing the juvenile courts, they were able to close the county-run detention facility and instead send detained juveniles (and millions of dollars in public money) to these newly built private jails. Though the judges themselves are facing several years in prison, the private juvenile detention centers are still operating and are not a target of the federal investigation. No charges have been filed against the private prisons that paid the bribes, nor the company officials involved.

## **The Bail-Out for the Wealthy**

*"We're looking at a new form of public-private partnerships, one in which the public shoulders all the risk and the private sector gets all the profit."*

—Joseph Stiglitz<sup>8</sup>

In order to help stabilize the banking system and financial markets, the federal government has poured 17.5 trillion dollars into private companies and investors, forming public-private partnerships at an unprecedented tax-payer expense. Paul Krugman, a Nobel Prize winning economist, wrote "Now the administration is talking about a 'public-private partnership' to buy troubled assets from the banks, with the government lending money to private investors for that purpose. This would offer investors a one-way bet: if the assets rise in price, investors win; if they fall substantially, investors walk away and leave the government holding the bag. Again, heads they win, tails we lose."<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, the government approved this plan to buy worthless assets, socializing the potential losses that investors faced but privatizing most of the potential profit.

To make matters even worse for the public, very little effective oversight is being created to regulate the trillions of dollars being handed out to banks and investors. The special inspector appointed to oversee these bank bailouts, Neil Barofsky, released a report at the end of April 2009 that stated that the latest bail-out plan was "inherently vulnerable to fraud and should not be started without stronger safeguards." He also detailed the potential problems created by allowing the same banks and credit rating agencies whose decisions lead to the financial crisis to regulate themselves without the government demanding even the most basic information on how they planned to spend their bail-out dollars. This lack of oversight has resulted in bailed-out banks using public money to provide enormous executive bonuses. Out of \$175 billion tax-payer dollars given to nine banks on the verge of failure, \$32 billion have been spent on bonuses.<sup>10,11,12</sup>

## What can I do if a public-private partnership is proposed in my community?

- Educate yourself and do some research to find out more about the proposed public-private partnership.
- Investigate to see if there are community groups that are already working to fight against privatization in your area.
- Organize a community meeting or panel discussion with your neighbors to make an action plan. Sign people up to take action.
- Build public support by writing letters to the editor of your local paper or passing around a petition.
- Organize a rally, march or protest. Be creative!
- Find out the dirt on the corporations involved and target them.

## A Philadelphia for the People Who Live Here: Dreaming of a Different Kind of Democracy

The mayor's office and its corporate friends want residents to believe that the only option for the future of Philadelphia is to privatize public services and spend massive amounts of public money to entice more corporations to the region. This is a vision for Philadelphia that funnels wealth to the top at the expense of the majority, who are left struggling to make ends meet, while allowing city government to outsource its responsibility for the collective welfare of city residents.

Of course, there are many ways to fund city services without handing power over to corporations. In fact, one solution would be to tax corporations at an equitable rate instead of showering them with discounts and incentives. Other options include: re-evaluating funding priorities, changing tax structures so wealthier people pay their fair share, developing mechanisms of real community control over the budgeting process, ending the ten-year tax abatement on new construction and advocating for a reallocation of federal funding that diverts our tax dollars away from banks and the military and towards our cities, towns and communities. Considering that all of these alternatives have been persistently left out of the debate around the budget crisis, we can see that our city government's current approach isn't defined so much by bankrupt funds as it is by bankrupt priorities.

Meanwhile, poor and working people have been consistently excluded from the decision making process around how public money should be spent, even though people who live in Philadelphia's neighborhoods are in the best position to know what their communities need, not private corporations or city bureaucrats. Working long hours—possibly at multiple low-wage, uninsured jobs—leaves little time to spend lobbying at City Hall or organizing neighbors to pressure decision-makers to invest public money in social services. And cuts to essential services mean that people are scrambling even after they get off work to cover the gap left by fewer library hours, fewer healthcare services, fewer pools and fewer after-school programs. We need to fight public-private partnerships—not only because

privatization results in an erosion of democracy by moving important decisions from City Hall to closed corporate boardrooms, but also because shrinking social services threatens people's ability to engage in even the limited avenues left for participation in local decision-making.

Moving from public to private services is going from bad to worse, out of the frying pan and into the fire. What we want is to get out of the heat altogether. In order to do this, we need to build power at the grassroots and start determining our own agenda. If we were to put forward a community vision of real democracy for this city, what would it look like? How can we develop our people power, our collective capacity, to participate in the decision-making that shapes our lives? A first step might be to assert that we own the libraries, recreation centers, swimming pools, parks, streets, health centers and schools. In other words, we could start acknowledging that what is "public" fundamentally belongs to and is to be shared amongst all the people who live and work in Philadelphia. Poor and working people literally built the city with their hands and keep it running with their labor. The fabric of our neighborhoods does not belong to the government to cut up and sell to the highest bidder. We can, as communities and as a movement, agree to collectively oppose the privatization schemes hawked by city government. We can take a stand that our visions for Philadelphia do not, and will never, involve expanding corporate power.

We need to build a movement in Philadelphia where we can articulate and advance our own visions for the city. We need a movement that will prioritize residents' needs by fighting for better public schools, not Education Management Organizations; affordable housing, not state-subsidized condo developments; higher wages and job training programs, not more low-wage and unstable private sector positions. We need a multiracial, multi-issue grassroots movement that will fight for social and economic justice as well as genuine participatory democracy. Only by building a movement, can we, together, cultivate healthy, vital communities, on our own terms, from the ground up.

The Riverside County Library System, located in Riverside County, California, was the first library system in the country to turn over its entire operation to a private company when it hired the East Coast-based corporation Library Systems and Services, Inc. in July 1997. Christine Lind-Hague, president of the

Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association, responded, "Nobody runs a business out of the goodness of their heart. That's called a charity. That's not what they are doing. LSSI is making money off that deal. I say the community could do it themselves."

## Endnotes

1. [http://philadelphia.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/stories/2005/01/03/daily1.html?jst=b\\_ln\\_hl](http://philadelphia.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/stories/2005/01/03/daily1.html?jst=b_ln_hl)
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4. check out Philly Student Union at <http://home.phillystudentunion.org/>
5. RAND Report: State Takeover, School Restructuring, Private Management and Student Achievement in Philadelphia, [www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND\\_MG533.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG533.pdf)
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# Resisting the Coup Grassroots Style!

## Honduran and American Activists Dispel U.S. Media Lies

by Joanna Grim

In light of the overall absence of coverage by the mainstream news media, and the printing of misleading information concerning the situation in Honduras one month after a military coup ousted the democratically-elected President Manuel Zelaya in papers such as our own Philadelphia Inquirer – which prints deceptive articles such as Rick Santorum’s op-ed likening opposition of the coup to “going against democracy” and yet declines to print op-eds submitted by local activists and educators hoping to bring another perspective to the Inquirer’s readers – Philadelphians have to ask “What inquiries are being made?” “What story is being told?” “Whose interests are being served?”

That done, it is clear to many that when it comes to international events with curious implications for the U.S. government or for specific corporations, Americans must look elsewhere for pertinent, reliable information. Luckily enough, Philadelphia was home to two informational events that not only dispelled recent media lies concerning the coup in Honduras but also engaged participants in critical discussion about the importance of community media, local activism, and international solidarity work.

The first event took place on Wednesday, July 29th at the Central branch of the Philadelphia Free Library. The room was packed beyond capacity on a stormy night and the room buzzed with energy as a diverse crowd absorbed information on the recent history of politics and social organizing in Latin America and in Honduras. The crowd heard descriptions of the reality of the coup in Honduras and the resistance and subsequent human rights abuses occurring as a result of the coup.

The presenters included Ramor Ryan, an Irish anarchist writer who lives in Chiapas, Mexico and reports on popular struggle, and Adrienne Pine, a militant anthropologist, assistant professor at American University in D.C., and the author of Working Hard, Drinking Hard, on Violence and Survival in Honduras. Despite her vast knowledge of politics and social struggle in Honduras and specifically about the coup, Adrienne Pine is one op-ed writer silenced by the Inquirer. This fact, as well as the energy gained from the event, fueled the crowd as it marched to the Inquirer building afterwards in protest of the dismal reporting on the coup, crying “Inquirer print the truth, stop your lies about the coup!”

The second event, on the evening of Friday July 31st, represented an incredible opportunity for Philadelphians to hear voices directly from Honduras. Five Honduran social justice activists, just arrived in the U.S. to begin a speaking tour, spoke for an eager

audience that filled the basement of Calvary Church in West Philadelphia. The presenters, Dr. Juan Almendares, Abencio Fernández Pineda, María Luisa Jiménez, Dr. Luther Castillo, and Gerardo Torres spoke of their experiences organizing for social justice in Honduras long before the violent and illegal coup and of the spontaneous movement that has risen in resistance to the coup.i

Tired from their travels but nonetheless impassioned, the speakers explained how resistance has taken the form of daily mass peaceful protests; protests that began the day of the coup and that have not ceased or faltered despite violent repression of protesters, the institution of nearly 24 hour curfews, and even attempts at banning protests. Reporting from Honduras, the Inter Press Service (IPS) corroborates this testimony, relating that “In the 36 days since Zelaya was hauled out of bed by soldiers and put on a plane to Costa Rica, the authorities say 260 demonstrations, roadblocks and public sector strikes have been held around the country by the presidents supporters.” The IPS also reports that in the regime’s crack down on these demonstrations, “three people have been killed, around 100 have been injured and 150 have been arrested and held for several hours or days.”iiWith their testimony, the speakers shared photographs, taken both by Associated Press and independent Honduran citizens, showing the streets teeming with people protesting against the coup and demanding justice. These images, which have been unavailable to most people in the United States due to the failure of the mainstream media to cover the event and to investigate the situation in Honduras, also gave brutal evidence of the repression of the people as they refuse to accept the coup and demand justice.

Images of murdered protestors, such as 19-year-old Isis Obed Murillo and high school teacher Roger Vallejo, both shot in the head by police or security forces, supplied a bleak backdrop. The speakers explained how Hondurans are risking their lives everyday, protesting peacefully and demanding justice, while reminding the group that the coup has been condemned by the international community, to the exception of the United States.

The speakers also insisted on the importance of international solidarity actions with the Honduran people as they resist the coup and on the importance of seeking and distributing information to Americans who are not receiving reliable or useful information through the mainstream media. They called for all present to stand in solidarity with the Honduran people in order to support them and also in the spirit of strengthening and maintaining their own struggles. Importantly, they asked the group to imagine what would happen if a military coup removed President Obama. What power would he



have in such a situation? Would Americans find this acceptable? In this way, the speakers made clear that the U.S. must condemn the coup and not take a hypocritical stance in which democratic values become the whims of those in power. Dr. Juan Almendares especially illuminated the necessity for international solidarity work, describing how he was a survivor of torture and how he had benefited directly from such actions.

Both of these events left those who attended emboldened by information and tangible solidarity with those struggling in Honduras. Interestingly, these events both highlighted the problem that the mainstream media poses and the importance of grassroots and community media to supporting the struggles of those around the world and in building and strengthening struggles for social justice at home.

In the past few months, activists in Philadelphia have been targeting these issues by protesting the Inquirer’s questionable practices, as well as its misleading and unequal reporting. Before the most recent protest of the reporting on Honduras, a group of activists held a rally in May protesting the hiring of “Torture Memo” author John Yoo.\* Furthermore, several activists who attended both events have pledged to flood the Inquirer with op-eds concerning the coup and are considering this and other tactics for continued use in addressing the failure of the mainstream media and in demanding the truth.

Despite the brutal treatment of the people at the hands of the regime that now claims to govern, the struggle against the coup continues. The speakers from Honduras expressed that the events there are uniting the people and building a broader social movement. By standing in solidarity with the Honduran resistance to the coup, Philadelphians and

people of the U.S. will not only help to support their struggles and legitimate them in the U.S. but be emboldened by their voices and strengthened in our own fights!

Defenestrator Note: *John Yoo was an official in the Bush Administration’s Justice Department who wrote legal justifications for torture. When he wasn’t busy paving the way for Abu Ghraib, Yoo helped justify the Bush Administration’s wiretapping. Criminal proceedings against him have begun in Spain; in the meantime, the Defenestrator Collective wishes this scumbag the worse at the Inquirer.*

For more information:  
<http://www.narconews.com/>

## Honduras Update

someone put  
some text here

# What I Learned At The WTO Protests In Seattle...

by Pete Tridish

## A Ruckus I Couldn't Miss

I first heard about the Seattle Protests at a Ruckus Society training camp about 6 months before the WTO was scheduled to come to town. Ruckus is a group famous for the dramatic and daring banners they hang from cranes and buildings and towers; they focus on human rights and environmental issues. The speaker there representing the anti-WTO organizers, after making an eloquent case for the connections between all the globalization issues and for a coalition of activists of all stripes, said “We will lie down on the airstrips and stop the delegates planes from landing. If they get past that, we will block the highways leading from the airport to the city. If they get past that, we will block the hotels they are staying in, we will block the streets, and we will block the doors of the convention center and we will not let them make another another free trade deal that week in Seattle.” How could I not help with such a plan? In that moment I committed to go.

## The Prelude

I had three plans when I went to Seattle a few weeks before the protests. One was to assist with the communications teams. I had met some of the people responsible for the communications systems at Ruckus, and thought I might lend a hand setting up communications for the event. I trained with the communications teams, and was one of the groups that checked out walkie talkies to help on the days of the events. Our training was strict. Contrary to popular myth, we did not use the communications systems to direct the protests, or call for blockades of particular intersections, and so on. The role of the communications team was to hang back, observe the events, and notify legal, medics, and independent media of situations needing their attention. Small affinity groups used smaller walkie talkies inside their groups to communicate from one end of a small action to another, but most of the co-ordination was done in the days leading up to the protests in big open meetings.

The actual plans of each affinity group covering a “pie slice” were a secret known only to that affinity group, and they did not change much based on external information. Each group was responsible for somehow stopping all traffic from the convention center, by whatever means they chose which were kept secret from the overall organizers. This made us much more immune to rumors and bad information and contributed to the success of the actions. Even though the police could sneak a number of WTO delegates in through a weak link in our pie slice blockades, the event was so big that momentary breaches of our lines would still not allow enough of the delegates to get in for the conference to go on with business as usual. And there were plenty of people not committed to any particular blockade, who could step in and defend an intersection if the original blockade was broken.

My second plan was to help out with setting up the independent media center. Since I have never been much of a content producer, I focused on helping to set up the space. I worked for a few days helping to install phone jacks and wiring so that we could fit many dozens of journalists in the space during the events. I also attended lots of meetings where the mission of the space and logistics around its use were established. The IMC was centrally located downtown. As a result we retreated there when the street battles got to be too much.

My third plan was to work with Stephen Dunifer, Studio X and various other pirate radio organizations, to set up a large number of radio transmitters throughout the city. These radios would provide an alternative news source during the protests. An empty store front was rented near the King Dome where a number of workshops were conducted on soldering together transmitters, building antennas, and training people in radio skills. While it was a bit haphazard, the goal was to fill a number of available frequencies with pirate broadcasts of content produced for



the WTO protests. We built an awesome antenna out of an umbrella and a mixer board made out of a suitcase and children's electronic music toys.

## It Starts:

Tuesday: My friend Joan and I started out with a crew of about ten people carrying the umbrella and suitcase transmitter, and several carrying boom boxes. We started to walk around the perimeter, visiting different blockades with our goofy radio setup. Our programming left a bit to be desired, limited to running commentary as we walked along, interviews with random people passing by, and a bit of music. Our “show” probably broadcast for 3 or 4 blocks, though if we got to a high point we probably could have gone further, if anyone knew to listen. The first few hours were pretty fun, but by noon or so it became clear that the day was going to be more than we bargained for. Other stations, set up in trees and around the periphery of the city, successfully continued broadcasting throughout the week. For somewhat hilarious footage of our walking radio station, you can check out the movie Pirate Radio USA, a movie about the pirate radio movement with a lot of focus in Seattle. <http://www.pirateradiousa.com/>

The police had started tear gassing in several places, and using beatings and direct applications of pepper spray to the seated blockaders. They were also starting to charge our lines. We put away the transmitter because no one would hear it in this chaos. We continued to make a circuit around the convention center. Joan and I joined newly forming blockades then leaving to help seed the next promising intersection ten or fifteen minutes later, once our forces seemed to have the intersection under our control.

Everything I saw on the part of the blockades on Tuesday morning was entirely non-violent, and this held up under a brutal police assault. We saw a lot more of it than many people, because over the course of the day we walked all the way around the perimeter, stopping wherever it seemed we could lend a hand. Our lines often held for quite a while, or they would be broken and quickly form back up

as soon as the police moved on. Starting in the afternoon, I saw more people begin to fight back. As the tear gas canisters came down, people began to throw them back. A few hours later, police car tires started to get slashed to immobilize them, and I started seeing windows getting smashed.

## Self-Defense: An Obvious Ethical Choice

I had never been tear gassed before, and it was surprising. Your first instinct is to run away. But once you have stood your ground for a minute or two, the effect wears off and future canisters are not nearly so scary. I had a thick pair of leather work gloves on, and I put on a bandanna to protect against the gas. I (like a number of others) started running towards the canisters when they came down in our midst and tossing them back towards the police lines. They were hot and smoky but not really so bad if you could be quick about it. There were also these things we called flashbangs that made a really loud bang and a really bright flash, that would go off about a few feet away and could really shake you- I don't know what would happen if one hit you. The flashbangs were similarly scary at first, but it is surprising how quickly you can get used to such things. Your whole body shakes for half a second, and instinct tells you to cover your face and hunch towards the fetal position. Then it is over as fast as it happened and you're back. Apparently the police used much more dangerous forms of nerve gas in the following days.

The police generally fired the tear gas from powerful rifles from pretty far away. The riot police, with their armor and weapons and masks and equipment, were heartless cowardly bullies. Straight up. My main goal was getting the tear gas away from us, but I can't say that in that moment I would have minded clunking one of them with the bombs they had just shot at us. I doubt the ones I chucked back at them even reached them, the cops shot them from further away than I could throw.

The under-told story of Seattle (lost in the window smashing anarchist controversy) is the immensity and effectiveness of the blockades. Many people focus on the glass smashing and the battles, but the simple fact was that many delegates could not get through the people's blockades.

Often the blockades were three people deep and probably a hundred people across, running from one side of the street to the other, anchored to the buildings on each side. They were simply impassable without resorting to violence. And they were at every intersection for a circumference of perhaps 30 blocks. Some were bigger than others. In smaller areas, it might just be 7 or 8 people blocking a narrow back staircase past a parking garage, and running up and blocking anyone who tried to pass. But a large number of the blockades involved hundreds of people linking arms. Since the police were not arresting much on Tuesday, just trying to disperse people - even if they blew past our lines people would join another blockade blocks away, or retake the intersection as the police re-deployed.

Many of the organizers and blockaders were angry at “The Anarchists” over political differences relating to violence and property destruction, but the feeling I saw on the street was that many people were appreciative of how well pre-continued on page 22



# Bomb It

by Arielle Burgdorf

You're walking down the street when suddenly you see it: a stencil of a bandana-clad man about to throw something. Except where there should be a molotov cocktail in his hand, there's a bouquet of flowers. Is it clever? Will it make people think? And, most importantly, is it art?

Ever since the time of cavemen, human beings have had the urge to write on walls, to draw themselves into existence. Yet, of graffiti as a direct action technique is still critically underemployed. Graffiti is given little credit with helping out in revolutionary struggles--perhaps because much of it is assumed to be "tagging," or egotistically writing up your name in order to become famous. But graffiti as a revolutionary movement in

itself is the subject of the documentary "Bomb It." The documentary chronicles graffiti and street art as a worldwide phenomenon that began right here in Philadelphia with the man known as "Cornbread." Through interviews with dozens of graffiti artists from 5 continents, the film explores what inspires graffiti, and what keeps it going. The film paints a picture of street art as a grassroots movement that spans across different ages, races, and genders, defying easy categorization. There are the typical gang members who do graffiti, but there are also art school graduates, stencilers, sticker-makers, bored teenagers, and kindergarden teachers. The film does a great job of examining at the issues in each country that motivate graffiti artists (Consumerism and materialism in America, racism in South Africa, Big-brother type surveillance in the UK,

etc.) "Bomb It" examines in detail what makes graffiti so addictive—a combination of recognition, camaraderie with fellow artists, the thrill of taking back public space, and the freedom to say anything you want to the world.

All the artists have different messages they're trying to get out; for instance, Blek le Rat of France makes giant stencil posters he pastes to walls that generally cover issues such as poverty and homelessness. Some of the artists may have a political message but they are also trying to become rich and famous, and this is where the integrity of the art may be compromised. The most prominent example of this in the film is the American Shepard Fairey, famous for the "Obey" slogan and the Barack Obama "Hope" poster. Fairey is one of the most successful and easily recognizable graffiti art-

ists, with a lucrative career making ads for various companies, his own clothing line and a book. This is where the line between revolutionary art and the corporate art it rebels against becomes blurry. Is Fairey a hero of the graffiti movement, the final pinnacle who reaps the rewards of his hard work? Or has he just become a piece of the machine he was originally rebelling against? Many of the artists in the film argue that art is only graffiti as long as it remains illegal, underground, and unprofitable. Even if you're not interested in graffiti, the film is still worthwhile for a look at how art can contribute to public opinion and provide an alternative to the messages we are constantly sent from the government and media.

The film is available in its entirety at <http://www.babelgum.com/bombit>.



## Anti-Capitalism Goes Mainstream

### Michael Moore's New Film Names the System and Presents a Radical Democratic Critique

Alex Knight, October 15, 2009

**C**apitalism: A Love Story, which opened in 962 theaters earlier this month, is Michael Moore's most ambitious work yet - taking aim at the root cause behind the injustices he's exposed in his other films over the last 20 years. This time capitalism itself is the culprit to be maligned in Moore's trademark docu-tragicomic style. And by using the platform of a major motion picture to make a direct assault at the root of the problem, Moore has created space in the political mainstream for a radical conversation (radical meaning "going to the root").

It's a conversation that is desperately needed as the economic crisis continues to devastate low- and middle-income Americans in spite of President Obama's and Congress' efforts to stop the bleeding by throwing trillions of dollars at the banks. Earlier today Democracy Now! reported that while the Dow Jones tops 10,000 for the first time in a year, foreclosures have reached a record level of 940,000 in the third quarter. But with this film airing in major chain cinemas across the nation, the normally taboo topics of how wealth is divided, who owns Congress, and how vital economic decisions are made are now open for discussion in a way they haven't been in the U.S. for decades.

In Capitalism, Michael Moore shows the reality of the economic crisis for America's usually-invisible poor and working class. The movie begins with a family filming their eviction from their own home. In a terrifying scene, we watch from inside their living room window as 7 police cars roll up to throw the ill-fated family onto the street for failing to make their payments. Moore explains, "You see [a foreclosure] really for the first time from the point of view of the person being thrown out of the house." This same bottom-up viewpoint carries the audience through the rest of the film, from the stories of kids in Pennsylvania sent to private detention centers for minor offenses by judges who received kickbacks from the prison company, to airline pilots whose wages are so low they have to go on food stamps.

By grounding the viewers in the human costs of out-of-control capitalism, Moore finds firm footing for launching his attacks on the Wall Street firms who he believes are responsible for this crisis. As the film points out, the richest 1% of Americans now control more wealth than the bottom 95%, a sorry state of affairs that has grown steadily worse since the 1980s. Ronald Reagan, Alan Greenspan, and his two buddies Larry Summers and Robert Rubin are implicated in Capitalism as responsible parties behind the gutting of regulations and the deliverance of the federal govern-

ment into the hands of the bankers.

Michael Moore's conversations with congressmen and women about the \$700 billion bank bailout passed last October best illustrate this transfer of power. The congresspeople are remarkably candid in their dismay at what was essentially a blank check to Goldman Sachs, Bank of America and Citigroup. Representative Baron Hill from Indiana recounts that the bailout bill was pushed through Congress in a similar manner as the Iraq War authorization, under threat of catastrophe and terror. Marcy Kaptur, congresswoman from Ohio, however, does one better. "This was almost like an intelligence operation," she laments. And when Moore asks her if the bailout represents a "financial coup d'état" by the bankers, she responds, "I could agree with that. Because the people here [pointing to the Capitol] really aren't in charge. Wall Street is in charge."

We also see Kaptur's courageous honesty on the floor of the House, urging Americans to resist foreclosure by remaining in their homes. Detroit sheriff Warren Evans stands out as another hero in the film when he announces he will cease foreclosure evictions in his jurisdiction because of the damage to the community caused by making more houses vacant and more families homeless. Thankfully Moore also features the grassroots organization Take Back the

Land, which has boldly responded to the crisis by moving evicted families back into their homes in the Miami area.

Regular folks fighting back against a system that is depriving them of income, housing, health care and other basic needs is inspiring stuff to watch, and it's not something we're used to seeing up on the big screen. Capitalism displays this grassroots defiance surprisingly well by humanizing those on the bottom of the pyramid. One man whose farm is foreclosed angrily warns, "There's got to be some kind of rebellion between people who've got nothing and people who've got it all." His words are buttressed by a behind-the-scenes look at Republic Windows & Doors, where laid-off workers occupied their Chicago factory and refused to leave until receiving their promised severance pay. For Moore this represents the kind of direct action that everyday people must now begin to take to protect themselves from having to pay for the misdeeds of the wealthiest one percent.

This call to action is well taken. However, one piece lacking in the film's analysis of capitalism is how the system of economic power interlocks with other structures of authority and oppression, for example U.S. imperialism, patriarchy and white supremacy. Capitalism affects different people in extremely different ways, and while some fear losing their jobs, others

*Continued on page 19...*



# Take Back the Land Campaign

## Building a Movement

A severe housing crisis exists in the United States. All across the country, despite courageous struggles against divestment, land speculation and gentrification, public housing communities are being permanently displaced as developments are razed to the ground. Millions of families have been dispossessed of their homes, wrongly evicted and displaced from their communities by the escalating foreclosure crisis. Homelessness is escalating to levels unseen since the 1930's as a direct result of the various forces of displacement stated above and economic dislocation from increased automation, deindustrialization, and the globalization of production.

Historically oppressed peoples and women are bearing the brunt of the housing crisis. Working class African Americans in particular are being devastated by the destruction of public housing, evictions from foreclosures, the record loss of home equity, and spiraling homelessness.

The government's promotion of discriminatory politics and policies lies at the heart of the housing crisis. It's support of redlining, predatory lending, gentrification, hyper-inflated speculation and a near exclusive system of private homeownership and land tenure privileges wealthy elites and exploits the working class and the poor. The government's unwillingness to change these discriminatory policies and practices constitutes a gross violation of its obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to adequate housing for the individuals and peoples under its jurisdiction.

### The Human Right to Housing

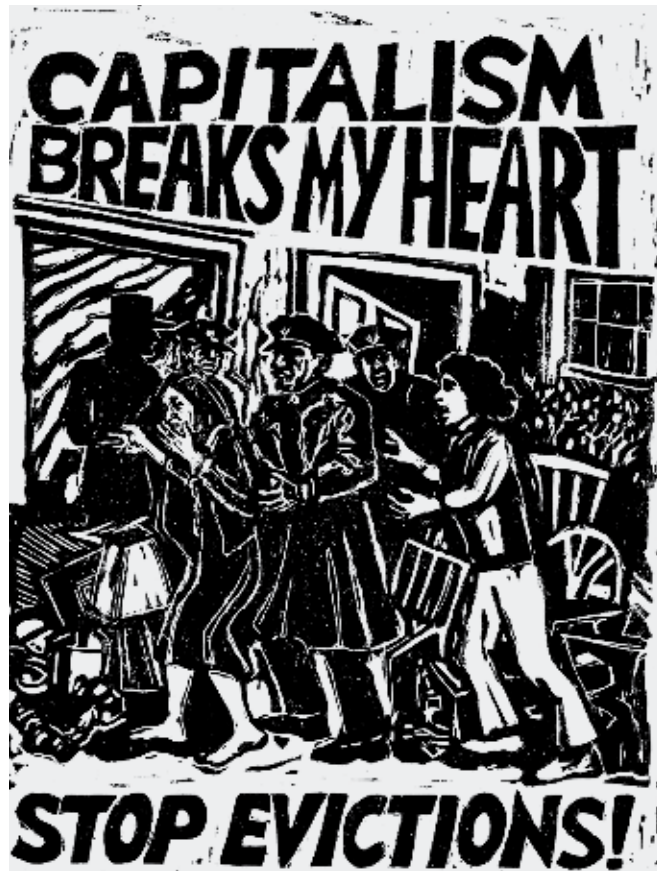
Housing is a fundamental human right protected by Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR), and Article 5 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), among others.

To realize the right to housing, and solve the housing crisis, we need a national "Take Back the Land" movement. To build this movement the Land and Housing Action Group of the US Human Rights Network (USHRN) - composed of the Chicago Coalition to Defend Public Housing, Picture the Homeless, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Survivors Village, and Take Back the Land - is launching a national "Take Back the Land"

campaign.

### Principles

The Take Back the Land campaign is rooted in the following principles:



1. **Housing as a Human Right.** Land and adequate housing should not be commodities to enrich the elite but instead, like air, should be protected as a common good.
2. **Local Community Control over Housing.**
3. **Leadership by Impacted Communities,** particularly low-income Black women.
4. **Direct Action.**

### Call to Action

The campaign will focus on the following:

- **Foreclosure Related Evictions.** In the

context of the millions of families across the country homeless and under-housed, continued foreclosure and demolition related evictions, of owners or renters in houses, apartments or public housing, is counter productive. We must put an end to foreclosure related evictions through campaigns of community and home defenses.

- **Foreclosed Homes.** After a vicious cycle of gentrification, which escalated housing prices and forced the removal of entire historical communities in the name of development, the foreclosure crisis has reached epidemic proportions. Perfectly good homes sit vacant, for years on end, the property of banks that already have been paid for them by the federal bailout. These homes must be filled with families in need of housing.

- **Vacant Buildings.** As the homeless sleep in the streets, cars and parks, vacant buildings, owned by banks and local governments, dot the urban skyline and shock the moral conscience. These structures must be put to use for the benefit of people in need of housing.

- **Vacant Land.** During the housing "boom," local governments made publicly owned land available to politically connected developers at fire sale prices. Now that boom times are over, vacant land must now be returned to use for public housing and other public goods.

- **Public Housing.** Even as the housing crisis intensifies, municipalities across the country are shedding public housing units through demolition, deliberate vacancy and privatization. In this time of great need, we cannot afford to lose one inch low-income housing. Public housing must be put to its intended use and

controlled by residents and local communities.

- **Right to Return.** Whether through gentrification, public housing demolition or the combination of natural disasters and government actions, large numbers of people have been forced to leave their long time communities in order to make room for wealthier, often whiter, people. We must have the right to return to our historic communities and rebuild them for the benefit of all.

Take Back the Land is a comprehensive campaign initiative, which includes a direct action campaign and the grassroots initiative to build alternative institutions, such as land trusts, co-operatives, and other collective ownership and management vehicles to exercise direct community control over land and housing. Take Back the Land's objective is to realize the human right to housing by opening vacant housing and transforming land use for the benefit of oppressed and low-income communities. We are calling on all those who have been displaced, dispossessed and discarded from their homes and communities, and all those believe in human rights, to join us in this campaign.

The USHRN Land and Housing Action Group is calling for a month of direct actions throughout the country, commencing on May Day 2010 (May 1st, 2010) to reclaim our homes and communities from the banks, speculators, and gentrifiers. Join us by organizing actions in your city and region, designed to meet your own local conditions and needs. We also ask everyone who supports this initiative to spread the word and help the campaign reach the critical mass necessary to effect change.

### USHRN

The US Human Rights Network was formed to promote US accountability to universal human rights standards by

continued next page





# Hell on Earth (continued from page 8)

reported that they found social isolation to be as tortuous and agonizing as any physical abuse they suffered.”

There is no evidence that solitary confinement is effective in promoting discipline or preventing violence, its purported goal, but lots of evidence that it encourages recidivism. Its ineffectiveness seems like common sense: take away activities, education and work programs, weightlifting/physical fitness rooms, crowd way too many prisoners into small spaces with nothing to do and it's a recipe for disaster, even for those with no history of violence. And yet, instead of addressing any of these issues, despite reports of its ineffectiveness and damage, solitary repeatedly is seen as the answer: “The number of prisoners in these facilities [solitary] has risen to extraordinary levels. America now holds at least twenty-five thousands inmates in supermax prisons. An additional fifty to eighty thousand are kept in restrictive segregation units – many of them in isolation, although the government does not release these figures” (Gawande).

In England there was such a large public outcry against the use of solitary that the government was forced to reconsider its use. “Beginning in the nineteen eighties,” Gawande’s report shares, “they gradually adopted a strategy that focussed on preventing prison violence rather than on delivering an ever more brutal series of punishments for it. The approach starts with the simple observation that prisoners who are unmanageable in one setting often behave perfectly reasonably in another. This suggested that violence might, to a critical extent, be a function of the conditions of incarceration.” In the U.S., despite

the work of many prisoner advocates and groups like Critical Resistance and The Sentencing Project or here in Philly The Emergency Response Network and the Human Rights Coalition (HRC), no such public outcry is apparent, but it's necessary. A typical response is “well, what do they expect?” or “they deserve it,” as if prisoners should automatically lose access to the human and civil rights that must, in a society that believes in justice and equality, be available to all people. “Our willingness to discard these standards for American prisoners,” Gawande concludes, “made it easy to discard the Geneva Conventions prohibiting similar treatment of foreign prisoners of war, to the detriment of America’s moral stature in the world.”

My brother, who grew up in a privileged, white, upper-middle class environment and took a wrong turn, is, though scarred by his experience, relatively fortunate. He had access to decent legal support and was able to move out of the area and start his life over again. Within a racist, classist justice and prison system that has one out of every three young black males under its authority, a majority lack such agency.

## Excessive Force

Facts:

According to the Office of Children and Family Services:

1. Three-quarters of children entering New York’s youth justice system have drug or alcohol problems.
2. More than half have diagnosed psychological problems.
3. One-third have developmental disabilities.

According to a New York Times report (25 August 2009) a US Department of Justice investigation found that “excessive physical force was routinely used to discipline children at several juvenile prisons in New York, resulting in broken bones, shattered teeth, concussions and dozens of other serious injuries over a period of less than two years.” Reports of excessive force, sexual assault and improper medical care are rampant in juvenile and adult prisons around the country. Despite knowledge of the psychological and developmental difficulties of many juvenile prisoners, necessary counseling (by decent, caring practitioners) and treatment are routinely denied. A videotape from a juvenile prison in Stockton, California shows two teens being beaten by juvenile counselors. Reports on other juvenile prisons have described youth put in tiny, one-person cages during the legally mandated outdoor and classroom time. Female juvenile prisoners in Ohio, Pennsylvania and elsewhere have filed allegations of sexual assault, beatings and improper medical care. Investigators in the above-mentioned study “found that physical force was often the first response to any act

of insubordination by residents, who are all under 16, despite rules allowing force only as a last resort...anything from sneaking an extra cookie to initiating a fistfight may result in a full prone restraint with handcuffs. This one-size-fits-all approach has, not surprisingly, led to an alarming number of serious injuries to youth, including concussions and spiral fractures (bone fractures caused by twisting).”

As with the use of solitary, youth residential centers in the U.S. are ranked by groups like the ACLU and Human Rights Watch as among the worst in the world. Adult prisons are no better. Just last month in SCI Greene, located outside Philadelphia in Waynesburg, PA, two prisoners were assaulted:

Sunday, 9/13—Leonard Young was beaten by a cell extradition team under the command of Lt. Barkefelt. During the attack he was struck in the hands and wrist by an officer wielding a nightstick and injured so badly that he needed to be taken to the infirmary. There, he was held in a “hard cell” without a mattress with only a smock gown to cover himself.

Monday, 9/14--- Keith Anderson was beaten and choked (while handcuffed) by CO Shaffer on the way to the morning exercise period. The attack was in retaliation for grievances that Anderson’s filed for a series of religious and racially-based threats by Shaffer. During the assault, Anderson sustained injuries to his head, shoulder and jaw, and is now suffering from hearing loss to his left ear. (from an Action Alert, Emergency Response Network)

## The Erosion of Prisoner’s Rights and Recourse

In 1996, Congress passed a law, the Prison Reform Litigation Act (PRLA), making it extremely difficult for prisoners to challenge abusive treatment such as described above. According to a recent New York Times report “Prisoners’ Rights” (24 September 2009) “Prison officials have used this requirement to block lawsuits challenging all sorts of horrific conditions, including sexual abuse.” Like the U.S. military, prison employees - guards, counselors and administrators - are often protected, excused and get away with abusive behavior. The PRLA has made it much easier. Mishi Faruquee, director of Youth Justice Programs at the Children’s Defense Fund also blames unions for protecting abusive and violent prison workers. According to “4 Youth Prisons in New York Used

Excessive Force, “In November 2006, an emotionally disturbed teenager, Darryl Thompson, 15, died after two employees at the Tyron Center pinned him down on the ground. The death was ruled a homicide, but a grand jury declined to indict the workers.”

A new bill, the Prison Abuse Remedies Act was sponsored in Congress last year but failed to pass. We need to put pressure on politicians to try again this year.

Local and national coalitions advocating for prison abolition and prisoners rights need more support. Without a greater public outcry against the atrocities of our current prison system, we are accepting a culture that condones some of the worst human rights abuses in the world.

Sources:

Action Alert- Prisoners Assaulted in 2 Incidents at SCI Greene, Emergency Response Network. 1 October 2009.

Confessore, Nicholas. “4 Youth Prisons in New York Used Excessive Force.” The New York Times. 25 August 2009. Web.

Gawande, Atul. “Hellhole: Is Long-term Solitary Confinement Torture?” The New Yorker. 30 March 2009. Web.

“Prisoners Rights,” The New York Times. 24 September 2009. Web.

To find out more/get involved:

Critical Resistance – [www.criticalresistance.org](http://www.criticalresistance.org) – seeks to build an international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe.

Emergency Response Network – local - A network of family and friends and prisoners organizing against prison abuse. Check the defenestrator website – [www.defenestrator.org](http://www.defenestrator.org) – for updates on abuses at local prisons and add your voice and outrage by calling the numbers listed. The more people call, the more the prison knows that people outside the prison know what’s going on. It puts pressure on administrators.

Equal Justice Initiative – [ej.org/](http://ej.org/) - is a private non-profit organization that provides legal representation to indigent defendants and prisoners who have been denied fair and just treatment in the legal system.

Human Rights Coalition – Office in Philly, LAVA 4134 Lancaster Ave. - [www.hrcoalition.com](http://www.hrcoalition.com) – is a group of predominately prisoner’s families, ex-prisoners and supporters.

Stopmax – working to end solitary – [www.afsc.org/stopmax/](http://www.afsc.org/stopmax/)

## Take Back the Land continued

building linkages between organizations and individuals. The Network strives to build a human rights culture in the United States that puts those directly affected by human rights violations, with a special emphasis on grassroots organizations and social movements, in a leadership role. The Network also works towards connecting the US human rights movement with the broader US social justice movement and human rights movements around the world.

Underlying all human rights work in the United States is a commitment to challenge the belief that the United States is inherently superior to other countries of the world, and that neither the US government nor the US rights movements have anything to gain from the domestic application of human rights. Network members believe that the US government should no longer be allowed to shield itself from accountability to human rights norms and that the US civil, women’s, worker, immigrant, LGBTQ, prisoner and other rights movements that stand to benefit, perhaps now more than ever, from an end to US impunity in this regard.

For more information email [housingrights@ushrnetwork.org](mailto:housingrights@ushrnetwork.org) or call 404.588.9761.

# Police Militarization at the G20 (continued from page 6) CAPITALISM continued

were self-described anarchists, dressed in black, many with bandanas across their faces. The police warned everyone these people were very scary. My cab driver said the anarchist spokesperson looked like Harry Potter in a black hoodie. The anarchists were joined in the park by hundreds of other activists of all ages, ultimately one thousand strong, all insisting on exercising their right to protest. This drove the authorities crazy.

Battle dressed ninja turtles showed up at the park and formed a line across one entrance. Helicopters buzzed overhead. Armored vehicles gathered.

The crowd surged out of the park and up a side street yelling, chanting, drumming, and holding signs. As they exited the park, everyone passed an ice cream truck that was playing “It’s a small world after all.” Indeed.

Any remaining doubts about the militarization of the police were dispelled shortly after the crowd left the park. A few blocks away the police unveiled their latest high tech anti-protestor toy. It was mounted on the back of a huge black truck. The Pittsburgh-Gazette described it as Long Range Acoustic Device designed to break up crowds with piercing noise. Similar devices have been used in Fallujah, Mosul and Basra Iraq. The police backed the truck up, told people not to go any further down the street and then blasted them with piercing noise.

The crowd then moved to other streets. Now they were being tracked by helicopters. The police repeatedly tried to block them from re-grouping ultimately firing tear gas into the crowd injuring hundreds including people in the residential neighborhood where the police decided to confront the marchers. I was treated to some of the tear gas myself and I found the Pittsburgh brand to be spiced with a hint of kelbasa. Fortunately I was handed some paper towels soaked in apple cider vinegar which helped fight the tears and cough a bit. Who would have thought?

After the large group broke and ran from the tear gas, smaller groups went into commercial neighborhoods and broke glass at a bank and a couple of other businesses. The police chased and the glass breakers ran. And the police chased and the people ran. For a few hours.

By day the police were menacing, but at night they lost their cool. Around a park by the University of Pittsburgh the ninja turtles pushed and shoved and beat and arrested not just protestors but people passing by. One young woman reported she and her friend watched Grey’s Anatomy and were on their way back to their dorm when they were cornered by police. One was bruised by police baton and her friend was arrested. Police shot tear gas, pepper spray, smoke canisters, and rubber bullets. They pushed with big plastic shields and struck with batons.

The biggest march was Friday. Thousands of people from Pittsburgh and other places protested the G20. Since the court had ruled on this march, the police did not confront the marchers. Ninja turtles police showed up in formation sometimes and the helicopters hovered but no confrontations occurred.

Again Friday night, riot clad police fought with students outside of the University of Pittsburgh. To what end was just as unclear as the night before.

Ultimately about 200 were arrested, mostly in clashes with the police around the University.

The G20 leaders left by helicopter and limousine.

Pittsburgh now belongs again to the people of Pittsburgh. The cement barricades were removed, the fences were taken down, the bridges and roads were opened. The gunboats packed up and left. The police packed away their ninja turtle outfits and tear gas and rubber bullets. They don’t look like military commandos anymore. No more gunboats on the river. No more sirens all the time. No more armored vehicles and ear splitting machines used in Iraq. On Monday the businesses will open and kids will have to go back to school. Civil society has returned. It is now probably even safe to exercise constitutional rights in Pittsburgh once again. The USA really showed those terrorists didn’t we?

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fear imprisonment, rape, or even being hit by a drone attack. It’s simply not possible to understand capitalism without also taking seriously racism, sexism, and homophobia.

Another weakness is how Moore handles Barack Obama with kid gloves. Even while his economic advisers are skewered in the film, President Obama comes out looking like a champion of the people, or at least a potential champion. In this respect Michael Moore bestows honors like the Nobel Committee, not so much for what the president has done, but for the “hope” of what he might do.

So what does Michael Moore propose as an alternative to capitalism? Not socialism, but a kind of economic democracy - an opportunity for average folks to have a say in how their money is used, from the workplace on up to the government. Moore takes us inside co-ops in America where workers vote on decisions about finances democratically, and where salaries are equal and adequate for everyone in the company. In one factory, assembly line workers and the CEO each make about \$60,000.

To reinforce his economic prescription, Moore even dug through archives to recover lost footage of FDR’s long-forgotten proposal for a “Second Bill of Rights,” which called for guaranteeing meaningful work and a living wage, decent housing, adequate medical care, and a good education for every American. It is striking how such common-sense ideas in our current political climate appear dangerously radical, even coming from the lips of a U.S. president. It seems the overriding purpose of Capitalism: A Love Story is to flip these expectations on their heads. For Michael Moore, guaranteeing basic economic security is as American as apple pie; what is radical is a system that would deny such prosperity for the wealth of a tiny few.

If there is to be any solution to the economic crisis that doesn’t involve millions more people thrown out of their homes or dropped from their health care, it will have to involve a sharp break from a system that values private profits higher than meeting people’s basic needs. To this end, Michael Moore has done a great public service by making a film that is essentially an invitation for views outside the bounds of established mainstream discourse to propose what might be done about the economic quagmire we now find ourselves in. It is time for an American Left to come out of the wilderness and speak boldly to the American public with their ideas for better ways of organizing our economy.



Jump Motherfuckers!

## The Budget we got (continued from page 4)

the very real problems of poor and working people in our times.

All this suggests that the solution to this predicament is not just more favorable short-term policies, but the creation of an independent politics, a real movement acting in the interests of the majority of the people in this region, both those who were already hurting prior to this crisis and those who are hurting now. Only such a movement will ensure that the resolution to the current crisis gets at the roots of the problem.

**(1)Defenestrator Note:** *Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a measure of economic performance that adds the value of all goods and services produced in a given area. It’s thought to be correlated with living standards, although people with a more critical view of the economy have been proposing ways of measuring economic performance that actually take into account people’s well-being and the environment.*

ried about their homes and stacking bills there seems to be less of everything. But there is a serious disconnect between how we experience the crisis on the ground, and what is going on in the rest of our economy. The fact is: there is still more wealth than ever before, and a select few are even profiting off of this crisis. Goldman Sachs, for example, posted its largest quarterly profits in 140 years at the end of June 2009, and gave huge bonuses to its top execs after turning its federal bailout into profit. In Philadelphia, we are being told to get by with less, despite the fact that we are home to a dozen Fortune 500 companies, several large universities, numerous hospitals, and thriving arts and tourism industries. This city has the 5th largest GDP(1) of all US cities, as of 2005, and was ranked 9th out of cities in the world. Anyone who spends time here can see clearly that there is both abundance and abandonment. In this context, we can understand that this crisis has been an opportunity for local government to realign its priorities and continue scaling back its responsibilities to provide for the majority

of its citizens.

### What We Need

Across the board, the city has chosen to sacrifice the needs of working and poor people in the interests of maintaining a balanced budget and a welcoming place for investment - in short, running the city government as if it were a business, instead of a public service. This last budget cycle has been a lesson in how beholden our city government is to an economic model that prioritizes the interests of large business over the interest of people.

Philadelphia is going down a path of political options that if continued will lead to a broken state. Broken because no city can say it has a functioning government if that government’s role is to shut down massive areas of its operations, levy increased taxes on those hurt the most during this economic crisis, and squeeze city workers. There is no democracy in this path for government, and little or no answers to



## In Defense of the Land (continued from page 5)

munity Garden for over 30 years, growing food for their families and neighbors. Many of the community gardeners preserve their harvest through freezing and canning, thus cutting household food costs.

The fact that so many community gardeners are elderly signals that there is a real generation gap in food knowledge. This is a result of many factors, including a cultural disregard for elders, displacement of people from their homelands, and our fast-food culture. To reconnect youth to the land, it is incredibly important to us at Mill Creek Farm that the space be open to kids for play, exploration, helping in the field, or looking for snakes. We also work with local schools and community programs, and offer paid summer internship for Saul Agricultural High School students. In the exchange between youth and older folks, there is invaluable sharing.

Per capita, Philadelphia has the 2nd fewest grocery stores in the country: this lack of options is a form of oppression. As a direct result of federal agricultural subsidies, institutions, such as public schools serve foods that are high in calories and low in nutrition. These limited options are a contributing factor to the epidemic of diet-related diseases in oppressed communities. In order to make our produce accessible, it is essential that we keep the price of our produce affordable a practice that we are able to maintain only through other fundraising. We have biweekly markets (Saturdays 11 am - 2 pm and Wednesdays 1-5pm, June -Thanksgiving) where we accept Access cards (food stamps), and Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers (received by seniors and WIC recipients for purchase of local produce). Many of our neighbors are originally from the South; okra, collard greens, and, sweet potatoes fly off the farmstand. We also donate regularly to our neighbors's church's food

distribution pantries. It is critical for food cupboards to get fresh food, especially in this economic climate where food assistance programs are regularly running out of both food and money.

## Take Back the Blocks

**P**hilly has an incredible number of abandoned homes and amount of vacant land, which means it has so much potential to meet people's basic needs. We have the right to housing, food, transportation, clean water, education, healthcare, as we want it to be. We are the city! We deserve our neighborhoods to be productive and beautiful, and we deserve to have community control over them.

We need to reduce the isolation people feel as a result of poverty. We need to be talking to each other. Is there a place to buy healthy and affordable food in your neighborhood? A health clinic? A library? Are they open regularly and at convenient hours? We must come together and discuss as neighborhoods, as communities and as a citywide network - imaginative solutions to meet our needs and demand the quality of life we deserve.

Beyond our own quality of life, we must think of the future. The term “sustainable” has been co-opted and taken from



## A view from the farm

us: a word that in its root means survival. The Mill Creek Farm and the Brown Street Community Garden represent an attempt to shape real, creative alternatives that are always evolving. We need to reclaim the term “sustainable” so that it applies to what will carry us out of poverty and other forms of oppression, and continues the legacy of resistance we have inherited, to ultimately create a world of dignity we will be proud to give to our children. We need to move beyond the current “green capitalist” definition of sustainable, which mostly applies to commodities and look more closely at sustainability as a way of life.

*All quotes excerpted from letters of support*

## People's Caravan (continued from page 6)

## Friday's People's March

**O**n Friday, September 25, about 5,000 protestors assembled in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh to join the People's March and heard speakers from a diverse group of organizations ranging from student, labor, environmental and peace to human and economic rights before marching to downtown and across the Allegheny River. We participated in full as the People's Caravan contingent, marching with multi-color banners, matching teeshirts and NEW chants!

## Caravaner Down

Two members of our caravan were wrongfully arrested while filming some of the police repression in the streets on Friday. Both are currently out on bail, but they'll need money to pay for court cost, lawyers and travel to beat the trumped up charges

We're asking that folks pay what they can so that we can pool money for his release! See the appeal on page 7

**<http://g20caravan.info/donate>**



Yes we carried all those zeros all the way from Philly



*Wooden Shoe Books*  
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# What I Learned from Seattle continued from page 12

pared the anarchist groups were for the tear gas and how they were doing a pretty good job of getting it away from the crowds. As people became angrier about the unprovoked police riots against the blockaders, I sensed a lot more became sympathetic to striking back against the police, and against property.

The Infernal Noise Brigade was absolutely magnificent. They were excellent drummers, and had obviously practiced a lot together and created a beautiful counterpoint -- something that blurred the lines between martial organization and a parody of martial organization. They were dressed in black and gray with gasmasks and giant fuzzy hats, and looked like they were really not to be fucked with. They would go to an empty, unprotected intersection, start drumming, and within ten minutes there would be a thriving dance party and enough people for a blockade. Then they would march off to bolster morale of other protesters or start another blockade.

## Night Falls

Throughout the day, police action was random, sporadic and violent. But mostly, the police seemed to be just holding their lines and awaiting orders. By around 6 pm, they changed strategy and started constantly moving their lines and storming protesters anywhere they saw them. After being chased several blocks from the area of the smashed up Gap to the Independent Media Center, I took refuge inside the pizza shop next to the Independent Media Center. I watched journalist Amy Goodman and Errol Maitland outside after everyone else ran in and barricaded the doors as the police swept past -- they were covered with tear gas but with their oversized professional looking equipment, the police just went around them.

I went back out later and half joined, half watched the cat and mouse game between the roving packs of protesters and police. It was not always entirely clear who was the cat and who was the mouse. Word came down that martial law had been declared, and a curfew was in effect until 7 the next morning inside a zone of downtown.

In the evening, I decided to rejoin the communications team to help move information for the protests. I would simply carry a walkie talkie and radio in reports if I saw situations that needed medical, media, or legal attention.

Wednesday I picked up a walkie talkie at the convergence space around 6 am and walked towards the first gathering of the morning, in the park, which was supposed to start at 7:30. My job was to be slick and discreet and stay out of the way and not get arrested.

## Wherein I Learn That I Am Not Nearly So Slick As I Might

## Hope...

I started walking towards the park gathering around 6:45 am, just a few blocks from the park where people were planning to gather. I walked along the big street at the edge of the no protest zone-- Denny Way I think. While walking I saw the police harassing several young people carrying a big puppet. As we watched, the police started ripping apart the puppet. I stopped at the corner about 50 feet away



and observed, as did others walking to the protest-- seeing no way to get around the fracas without going to the other side of the street where we believed that the no-protest zone probably began. When police saw that perhaps ten of us had accumulated on the corner and were watching them, a number of officers ran towards us with guns drawn and rounded us up, though we had walked away from the main street to a side street that was clearly out of the curfew zone.

They didn't arrest all of us-- they searched all of us, found that I had a radio in my bag, and I was taken away with two others. So I was one of the first three arrests of Wednesday -- so much for slick and in the background! They took us inside the martial law zone and handcuffed us to a street sign and held us there for about a half hour while looking for more people to arrest.

When I asked what charge I was being arrested on, they said "disobeying the mayor." They took us to the jail, where at first there were just a handful of us in a big room. Within an hour or two there were hundreds. Sitting and waiting to be processed, someone told me about the big jail solidarity plan. Since I hadn't planned to get arrested, I had not attended those meetings. The instructions were simple: No one give your name, and to the extent that you are comfortable, do not cooperate. There was no way they could legally hold us all for long. After being fingerprinted and photographed some of the protesters were mixed in with general population who

were being held for other crimes. The most talkative of these guys was very happy that he happened to be caught trying to steal a car at this time -- he figured that the way we had gummed up the system, there was no way that he could be processed in time for a legal arraignment and they would have to let him go. Because I refused to sign my name, they took away my glasses, which I am pretty much helplessly nearsighted without.

## Solidarity, Whatever!

I ended up in a jail cell with about twenty other WTO protesters. It was an awesome group of people. We had a steel worker, an opera singer, and people from all walks of life. Some of us went on hunger strike. I couldn't quite decide whether it was a good idea so I ate sometimes.

The second day in jail really tested my resolve. I started to get very, very nervous. I was thinking a lot about what had happened on the streets the day before. When I had grabbed those tear gas canisters and thrown them back, it seemed like the most reasonable thing in the world to me. The police, decked out in riot gear and gas masks, were shooting thousands of these things into crowds of unarmed civilians. I was throwing them back in the only direction where they wouldn't harm anyone -- back where they came from. Ethically, I was entirely convinced that my actions were appropriate and what I had done was self-defense and defense of other unarmed civilians who were being mercilessly attacked for bearing moral witness and effectively exercising their rights to assemble and speak. But I started thinking about all the videos that were being taken, and the immense resources and manpower of the state, and the ways that protesters would be demonized in the media. I realized that if I was stuck in jail for a long time, they might have time to go over footage and look for evidence of me doing more on Tuesday than what I was caught for on Wednesday, which was just walking along the edge of the martial law zone. If that happened,

my charge could change from "disobeying the mayor" to some form of felony assault on an officer. My mind raced as I calculated the risks and benefits -- if I got charged with a felony, that would be a ridiculously bogus charge and probably eventually thrown out, but would take our movement's time and resources to defend me against. And it could sabotage the much more practical time sensitive campaign work that I was personally responsible for in low power radio. I started to waiver and rationalize and hem and haw ... every few hours the jail wardens started to come in and offer us a quicker release if we broke solidarity and gave our names. I started to consider it -- thinking the sooner I personally got out -- the less chance of trouble for everyone. It didn't help that I was barely eating and that everything more than 2 feet away was a formless blur.

During this time, one mans voice stood out for me. As we took turns telling our life stories to pass the time, he told us that he lived a fairly ordinary life with a straightforward job, with no family depending on him. He was older, I would guess in his late 40s or early 50s, and had a very quiet, modest manner. He had read about the issues at stake with the WTO, and when he heard about these protests he decided that he had to do something about it. He had wrapped up his affairs, quit his job, and came out a few weeks early, prepared to commit civil disobedience. He had nonviolently blockaded exactly as he had planned and was arrested. He had decided to commit to do jail solidarity until the very end- he would refuse to leave the jail until the last felony charge was released. He said that he understood if others made different choices, but he had tied up his loose ends and had made sure there was nothing in his life holding him back to tempt him to break solidarity-- he was ready to maintain his moral witness until the very end.

This man had utter confidence and total peace with himself. He had thought through his choices and had made preparations, and so he was completely fearless. I, meanwhile, was a bit of a mess. I had wrapped my mind around the expediency of breaking solidarity around 6 or 7 iterations of possible scenarios over which I had very little knowledge or control.

I was familiar with the age old debate in the left between the use of violence and non-violence. I'd read the work of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, and also of Che Guevera and Malcolm X. I had seen good uses of non-violence for social change, but was also aware of the patronizing way some Americans encouraged its use in struggles around the world. I had seen both philosophies succeed and fail. I was intrigued by the example of the Zapatistas, who were armed but who had barely fired a shot in their struggle. They had managed to maintain autonomy in the territories they controlled for many years with the mere threat of violent resistance, and the resulting international attention that focused on



the ruling elites of Mexico.

I believe that people have a right to self defense. And I think there are certain political moments in history when violence really is the best option (if you think that makes me a freak radical, think of the American Revolution). However, never before this moment had I really understood the true power of non-violence. My unassuming and quiet jail cell friend was fearless and determined and confident in his actions, while I was trembling on the off chance that someone could twist my actions around to undermine the movement I believed in and the changes that I was trying to make. To my shame, in one moment I actually caved and after hesitating, offered to give my name towards the end of the second day when a guard came asking if anyone wanted to give up and go get processed and released.

Fortunately for me, I hesitated and waited too long to answer and missed the deadline by a few minutes and the guard would not take me. After that I firmed back up and decided that I was stupid and reaffirmed my jail solidarity before the next time the guards came around again. I did drop the hunger strike because I realized it was weakening my resolve ...

## Regardless Of My Personal Strength Or Weakness, We All Somehow Add Up To More Than The Sum Of Our Parts, At Least This Time

A day later they started releasing people who had not given their names, just to clear up space in the jail. I was released at 3 in the morning on Saturday. As I walked out of the jail, I was apprehensive again. The police had given back my glasses, but not my backpack with my wallet and the radio, claiming it had been lost. So they swiped my ID and the \$80 I had in there-- Jerks! I thought I would have to walk back through the streets of Seattle at 3 am in the light rain. But as I exited, some very nice young protesters were standing on the corner waiting for people to come out! They asked if I was OK, if I had been hurt or needed medical attention. They gave me some stale old bagels which was the best thing I ever tasted. And then the woman showed me the newspaper front page headline: WTO TALKS COLLAPSE. And I turned the corner and saw hundreds of people out at three in the morning camped on the steps of the jail, waiting for us to come out. A few were playing drums (not very well), people were even smoking pot out in the open, sleeping all over the place--- they had totally taken over the front of the jail!! It was amazing and hilarious! We had won! We had beaten the WTO, and even the steps of

the jail belonged to us!

The next day, I joined the jail solidarity efforts. I stayed much of the day in front of the jail, and helped a bit with rigging up tarps to keep everyone dry in the pouring rain as we waited to welcome more protesters being released. There were hundreds of us crowded under these tiny tarps, we were all getting wet. But one moment made it all worth while. There was a man standing next to me, wearing a suit, and he was telling a story. He worked for a Washington DC consumer organization and was a delegate at the WTO. He was staying in the same hotel as the other delegates, and he walks into the bar and who does he see sitting by himself at the end of the bar but the President of the WTO. So he goes over and sits next to him. The President of the WTO looks up from sulking over his drink and says: “I am the President of the most hated organization in the whole world!” We all laughed and laughed in the rain and waited for the police to release our friends.



## Anarchism Saves The Nation State?

While I consider myself to be an anarchist, I come from a tradition that has nothing to do with the anarcho-primitivists prominent among those involved in the property destruction in Seattle. Most people think of anarchism in very vague terms without realizing the many different sorts of ideas people hold that call themselves anarchists. The anarcho-primitivists come from a strain of ideas that rejects the idea of modern society and civilization, but most anarchists have a different view from that of the root causes of the world’s ills. The basic thing that holds all anarchists together is that we are all equally critical of Government and Capitalism, and all forms of social oppression such as racism and sexism. This is different from authoritarian socialism, which criticizes capitalism but sees little problem with the state, and different from libertarianism which criticizes government but trusts markets and capitalism to govern best in people’s interest. I’m an anarchist because I think that both today’s nation states and capitalism are fundamentally flawed. However different anarchists have very different visions of a better future and how to get there. The anarchism that interests me is rooted in the direct participatory democracy of town meetings, and it is an anarchism that embraces a scientific world view, with people democratically controlling the uses of technology. And it is not about smashing anything, but re-equipping communities with the tools of self governance. Similar to Noam Chomsky’s anarchist positions, I am willing to (in a given tactical moment) leverage the political process and the government in order to reign in individual worst excesses of capitalism before the market destroys

the planet-- as we plot a course towards a future of political structures based on direct democracy and local control. I don’t see participating in reformist politics to make small tactical changes as any different from working at a normal job for a company in order to make money to live, even if you’d rather be working in a co-operative. Doing normal politics or working a normal job is just expedient for living today, as we try to build the future we are trying to attain. I don’t believe that real fundamental solutions to the worlds problems can be gotten from the currently weakening power structure of representative democracy, or from the currently growing power structures of technocracy and rule by capital. Anarchism rooted in individualism, nihilism, primitivism, or punk rock, smelly clothes, and suburban rebellion have no appeal to me.

Truthfully, I thought that the organizers of the blockades were much closer to the anarchism I believe in than the window breakers. They used consensus, made decisions in open and transparent groups, listened carefully to all sides and respected other opinions, and did not bow down to any arbitrary authority but their collective conscience. These were the people who I felt were preparing the tools of self-governance that we could use in a better future.

I also think if these anarcho-primitivist groups involved in the property destruction were really ethical and had any real guts, they should have organized their own actions on separate days and not taken cover amidst the crowd of people who had agreed to a non-violent plan together. As far as I am concerned, they could have gone ahead and run through town and broken the windows of the ruling class any other day when they were not screwing up everyone else’s plan and not putting others at risk. On the other hand, little as I agree with them, I have to say I think that the vilification of the anarcho-primitivists by the “peaceful protesters” was a bit over the top and many people in the streets that day appreciated the feisty anarchist response to the police. It’s a moral horror for holiday shopping to go on as usual while people (who were just trying to save the planet from an international gang of rapacious thug corporations) were getting beaten to a pulp in the streets by police. The smashed windows added to the epic nature and stark reliefs of the day’s events, and I think it would have been almost unnatural if no one fought back. Tear gas and pepper spray and rubber bullets against unarmed civilians make even the nicest people really, really angry, and willing to do things they would not ordinarily do.

One of the great ironies of Seattle is that one day historians may proclaim that anarchists (of all stripes) had a role in preserving the power of the nation state. The deals being cut by the WTO usurped the power of nations to govern on behalf of their citizens. They were creating alternative international power structures that could punish governments that used their democratic processes to make decisions, that were for whatever reason, uncomfort-

## More on Seattle:

The Seattle protests and the wave of mass actions against global capitalism set in motion a number of developments and raised questions that have informed much of what we see happening today in terms of organizing against neoliberalism (or current forms of capitalism).

Check out these important reads, just a few among among many coming out of the post WTO anti-globalization movement:

**Where was the Color in Seattle? Looking for reasons why the Great Battle was so white**  
by Elizabeth ‘Betita’ Martinez  
<http://colours.mahost.org/articles/martinez.html>

**ON THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF GIANT PUP-PETS:windows, imaginary jars of urine, and the cosmological role of the police in American culture**  
by David Graeber  
<http://balkansnet.org/zcl/puppets.pdf>

**The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization**  
Edited By Eddie Yuen, George Katsiaficas and Daniel Burton Rose

for an exciting blow by blow documentary check out **This Is What Democracy Looks Like**, narrated by Janet aka Susan Sarandon and Michael Franti. Don't mess with that uhhh other movie starring Mr. Harrelson. You'll be put off cinema for life.

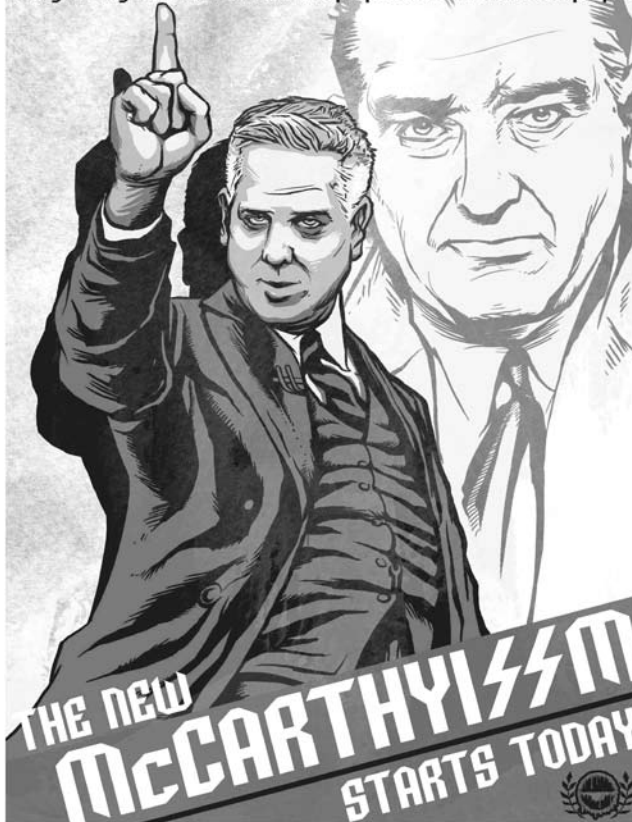
able for multi-national corporations. Many of these pathetic representatives of governments came prepared to give up their government’s power and sovereignty to a handful of unelected representatives of international capitalism. So it was the anarchists who prevented the governments from giving all their power to the corporations!

## I Count Myself Incredibly Fortunate For What I Learned In Seattle.

1. Ordinary people can stop corporate rule using little more than our bodies.
2. You can overcome your fear of tear gas if you get past the initial shock.
3. Even anarchists can practice together and make a really excellent marching band.
4. I am not nearly as invisible as I think I am.
5. I really need my glasses, and I make bad decisions when I am hungry.
6. Even the most powerful men in the world have hearts, and with hard work and direct action a social movement can get under these people’s skin.
7. There is a difference between an action that you can morally justify and what action has the most power. And the most aggressive, radical sounding action that can be morally justified is not always the most powerful. If you know deep in your heart that you have done right and your actions have been clear, direct and unambiguous, you can be truly fearless.

# Rebel Calendar

Boldly feeding the fears, hatreds and prejudices of the American people.



## Ongoing Events and Meetings...

### Food Not Bombs

In a country hungry for war, that bombs countries hungry for food..

Rain or shine: Servings are Sundays at 5:00PM and Mondays at 7:00PM across from the Free Library on Vine Street between 19th and 20th Streets  
In West Philly : sharings happen every Wednesday @ 5pm-CEDAR PARK (50th and Baltimore)  
for more info, see

### ACT UP

Weekly Meeting Every Monday from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm St. Lukes Church;

330 S. 13th St.  
(between Pine & Spruce) Email: actupphilly@crit-path.org for more info.

### Books Through Bars

Packing Café Every Tuesday from 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm The A Space; 4722 Baltimore Ave. E-mail: info@booksthroughbars.org for more info

### International Concerned Family &

### Defenestrator Movie Night

Last Thursday of every month at Firehouse Bicycles at 8pm  
50th & Baltimore to benefit the defenestrator prisoner mailing  
Call for info (215)727-9692 or info(at)firehousebicycles.com

### Friends of Mumia

Interested in being involved in the campaign for Mumia's release either email icffmaj@aol.com or call 215 476 8812

### PRAWN (Philadelphia Regional

Anti-War Network)  
Meets 1st Tues. at Local 4, AFSCME, 1606 Walnut.  
6:30-9pm www.prawnworks.net

### The Philadelphia Icarus Project: A Radical Mental Health Collective

Philadelphia Icarus holds its meetings the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month from 6-8 pm at the A-Space Anarchist Community Space.  
philadelphiaicarusproject@msn.com

### Wooden Shoe Books People's movie night

Free movie screenings held every saturday at Wooden Shoe Book Store. 7:30 PM, 508 south 5th street -- 215 413 0999

## Liberated Spaces...

### LAVA

The Lancaster Avenue Autonomous space is a center for radical media and organizing located at 4134 Lancaster Ave. in the Belmont Neighborhood of West Philly. info: 215.387.6155 or info@lavazone.org \* lava-zone.org

**A-Space** - a collectively run anarchist gallery and meeting/community space. Events are free and generally start at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted. Accessible by the 34 trolley. Plenty of parking for cars and bikes. They pass the hat to cover rent.  
4722 Baltimore Avenue Philadelphia, PA

19143

215.727.0882 a-space@defenestrator.org

### Wooden Shoe Books and Records -

Anarchist bookstore owned and run by an unpaid collective of geniuses with nothing better to do than sit around talking philosophy and riots. Carries a wide range of anarchist and radical books, periodicals, pamphlets, T-shirts, patches, CD's records etc.  
508 S. Fifth Street Philadelphia, PA  
215.413.0999 woodenshoe@rocketmail.com

**Firehouse Bikes** - A worker owned collective bike shop. 50th and Baltimore

**The Divine Bicycle Church** - Bike repair co-op at Neighborhood Bike Works. Tools, advice and recycled parts available. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday from 6:30-9pm  
40th and Locust Walk, behind St. Mary's Church

**Crossroads Women's Center** - open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-2pm or by appointment  
33 Maplewood Mall, Germantown 215-848-1120

**The Friends Center** - American Friends Service Committee HQ. Contains meeting spaces and offices for a gazillion different entities.  
1501 Cherry Street